LION

ANNUAL 1954

Frontispiece

THE REDSKIN ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE

LION ANNUAL 1954

Issued from
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

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CONTENTS

PICTURE STORIES

	Page
THE MYSTERY OF THE VANISHED SPACE-SHIP	3
SANDY DEAN'S PRIZE GUY	17
THE SLAVES WHO SAVED THE EMPEROR	31
PERIL ON THE TOMAHAWK TRAIL	56
OPERATION GUNFIRE	76
THE SECRET OF JU-JU ISLAND	97
THE JUNGLE ROBOT—PAL O' THE PYGMIES	110
THE SMASH-AND-GRAB SPEEDSTER	130

ARTICLES

THE WEIRD WAYS OF WITCH-DOCTORS	46
SCIENTISTS LAND ON THE MOON	71
WORLD-WIDE QUIZ	88
PICTURE PARADE OF FACTS FROM NEAR AND FAR	122

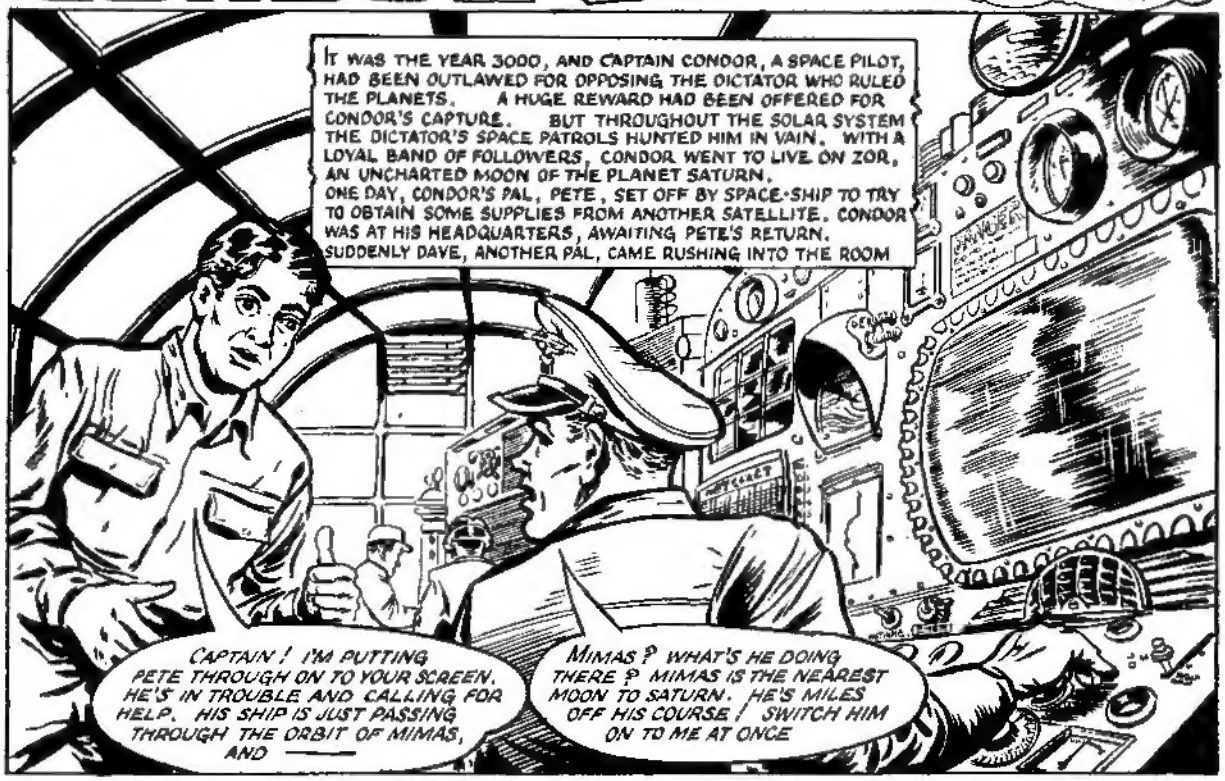
WRITTEN STORIES

	Page
THE TREE THAT STOPPED A REBELLION	12
TOO SMART FOR THE ATOM SPY	25
ONLY A PRESS-BUTTON CHAMP	39
CHALU THE ELEPHANT BOY	48
WIZ AND LOFTY—RESCUERS OF THE KIDNAPPED KING	65
RUST'S THE BOY FOR STUNTS	84
TULAK HUNTS THE POLAR TERROR	90
MIKE MERLIN — MASTER OF MAGIC	105
ROD AND THE RED ARROW RAIDERS	118
THE SCHOOLBOY TREASURE HUNTERS	124
KURDO OF THE STRONG ARM	137

CAPTAIN CONDOR

IN The MYSTERY of the VANISHED SPACE-SHIP

BY Frank S. Pepper.


IT WAS THE YEAR 3000, AND CAPTAIN CONDOR, A SPACE PILOT, HAD BEEN OUTLAWED FOR OPPOSING THE DICTATOR WHO RULED THE PLANETS. A HUGE REWARD HAD BEEN OFFERED FOR CONDOR'S CAPTURE. BUT THROUGHOUT THE SOLAR SYSTEM THE DICTATOR'S SPACE PATROLS HUNTED HIM IN VAIN. WITH A LOYAL BAND OF FOLLOWERS, CONDOR WENT TO LIVE ON ZOR, AN UNCHARTED MOON OF THE PLANET SATURN. ONE DAY, CONDOR'S PAL, PETE, SET OFF BY SPACE-SHIP TO TRY TO OBTAIN SOME SUPPLIES FROM ANOTHER SATELLITE. CONDOR WAS AT HIS HEADQUARTERS, AWAITING PETE'S RETURN. SUDDENLY DAVE, ANOTHER PAL, CAME RUSHING INTO THE ROOM
CAPTAIN! I'M PUTTING PETE THROUGH ON TO YOUR SCREEN. HE'S IN TROUBLE AND CALLING FOR HELP. HIS SHIP IS JUST PASSING THROUGH THE ORBIT OF MIMAS, AND ——
MIMAS? WHAT'S HE DOING THERE? MIMAS IS THE NEAREST MOON TO SATURN. HE'S MILES OFF HIS COURSE! SWITCH HIM ON TO ME AT ONCE

CONDOR PRESSED A BUTTON, AND FROM ACROSS MILLIONS OF MILES OF SPACE, PETE'S ALARMED FACE FLASHED ON TO THE SCREEN
A HOLE IN SPACE! HOW CAN THERE BE SUCH A THING? PETE'S CRAZY!
WE'RE OUT OF CONTROL, CAPTAIN CONDOR! I KNOW THIS SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME. WE'RE FALLING THROUGH A HOLE IN SPACE
SWITCH ME TO THE NUMBER ONE VISI-SCOPE. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT PETE'S SHIP

1 2 3 4
FOCAL SELECTOR
WHAT CONDOR AND DAVE SAW ON THE SCREEN FILLED THEM WITH ASTONISHMENT AND ALARM. SOMETHING UNBELIEVABLY FANTASTIC WAS HAPPENING
THIS IS TERRIBLE. THE NOSE OF PETE'S SPACE-SHIP HAS GONE. DON'T THEY REALISE IT ?
LET'S HAVE A CLOSER VIEW. SWITCH TO NUMBER FOUR
HALF THE SHIP HAS VANISHED NOW. YET PETE MUST BE STILL ALIVE. HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE ?
SWITCH BACK TO NUMBER ONE
THE SHIP IS JUST MELTING AWAY, CAPTAIN
I DON'T THINK SO. I BELIEVE IT STILL EXISTS, EVEN THOUGH WE CAN'T SEE IT
WE'RE FALLING FASTER, CAPTAIN ! QUICK ! TELL ME WHAT TO DO !
AS THE REST OF THE SPACE-SHIP DISAPPEARED, PETE'S VOICE FADED AWAY
IT'S GONE ! WIPED OUT !
IT CAN'T REALLY HAVE BEEN WIPED OUT, BECAUSE PETE WAS INSIDE IT AND WE CAN STILL HEAR HIM
HELP ! HE-L- !
THEN YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT WHAT PETE SAID WAS TRUE . THAT THEY FELL THROUGH A HOLE IN SPACE ? HOW CAN SOMETHING EMPTY HAVE A HOLE IN IT ? IT'S AGAINST NATURE !
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT NATURE ? THIS IS A MAN-MADE TRICK. TELL ALL OUR MEN TO ASSEMBLE ON THE ROCKET RAMP. I WANT TO TALK TO THEM

CONDOR TOLD HIS MEN WHAT HAD HAPPENED ; WARNED THEM THAT THE DICTATOR WAS PROBABLY THE CAUSE OF IT . HE THEN ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO LEAD A RESCUE PARTY TO GO TO PETE AND CO.'S HELP
NOW, WHO'S WILLING TO COME WITH ME ? IT WILL BE A TRIP FRAUGHT WITH PERIL . NOT ONE OF US MAY EVER COME BACK . WILL VOLUNTEERS RAISE THEIR HANDS ?
THE RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE
I WANT TO BE IN ON THIS
SORRY, DAVE, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE MAN I CAN'T TAKE . YOU MUST BE IN CHARGE HERE IN CASE ANYTHING GOES WRONG
COUNT ME IN !
DON'T LEAVE ME OUT, CAPTAIN
I'M WITH YOU !
THE EXPEDITION WAS SWIFTLY ORGANISED . IN A VERY SHORT TIME CONDOR'S SPACE-SHIP TOOK OFF WITH ROCKET TUBES THUNDERING . ON ITS JOURNEY TO THE DISTANT SPOT NEAR MIMAS WHERE THE MYSTERIOUS "HOLE IN SPACE" HAD SWALLOWED UP PETE AND CO.
KEEP THE VISI-SCOPE SWITCHED ON ALL THE TIME SO THAT DAVE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN IN TOUCH WITH US
CONDOR KNEW THAT MIMAS WAS USED AS AN ASTRONOMICAL STATION . IT WAS NORMALLY GARRISONED BY A HANDFUL OF THE DICTATOR'S MEN WHOSE JOB IT WAS TO CHART THE PATHS OF METEOR SWARMS AND TO CHECK THE ACCURACY OF STAR NAVIGATION MAPS . APART FROM THAT, MIMAS WAS A VALUELESS HUNK OF ROCK, FOUR HUNDRED MILES ACROSS, WITH NO ATMOSPHERE
CONDOR HAD EXPECTED SOMETHING TO HAPPEN WHEN THE LONG SPACE VOYAGE NEARED ITS END . AND HE WAS RIGHT !
WE'RE ALMOST AT THE SPOT WHERE PETE VANISHED . THERE'S MIMAS . WE MUST BE READY FOR ——
CAPTAIN ! WE'RE BEING PULLED OFF COURSE! OUR MOTORS ARE FAILING!
CONDOR THEN GOT ANOTHER SHOCK !
BY THE MOONS OF JUPITER! MIMAS IS INVISIBLE NOW! IN ITS PLACE THERE'S JUST — NOTHING . THIS IS PETE'S "HOLE IN SPACE."

BACK AT HEADQUARTERS ON ZOR, DAVE HAD KEPT IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH THE EXPEDITION BY MEANS OF HIS VISI-SCOPE. HIS FACE, FILLED WITH ALARM, NOW APPEARED ON THE SCREEN ABOARD THE SPACE-SHIP
WHAT'S HAPPENING? YOU'RE JUST MELTING AWAY!
OF COURSE WE'RE NOT! WE'RE STILL HERE, AS SOLID AS WE EVER WERE
CONDOR COULD DO NOTHING. NONE OF THE CONTROLS WOULD WORK. THE STRICKEN SHIP WAS FALLING HELPLESSLY THROUGH THE "HOLE IN SPACE."
CAPTAIN! I— CAN'T SEE — YOU. W-H-E-A-E — ZZZT!
IT'S FIZZLED OUT! WHAT'S WRONG BACK THERE?
NOTHING'S WRONG ON ZOR. IT'S US. WE'RE TRAPPED INSIDE A GRAVITY VORTEX — A KIND OF WHIRLPOOL THAT RADIO AND LIGHT WAVES CAN'T PENETRATE
SUDDENLY THE SPACE-SHIP GAVE A WRENCHING LURCH THAT HURLED THE CREW IN ALL DIRECTIONS
WHAT THE DICKENS—
WE'VE PASSED THROUGH THE WHIRLPOOL! WE CAN NAVIGATE AGAIN
AT THE SAME MOMENT A MOON APPEARED, ITS SURFACE OF MOUNTAINOUS ROCKS ONLY A FEW MILES AWAY
IT'S MIMAS, CAPTAIN! IT'S COME BACK!
IT'S BEEN THERE ALL THE TIME. BUT WE COULDN'T SEE IT BECAUSE THE LIGHT WAS DEFLECTED BY THE GRAVITY VORTEX ---- HOLD TIGHT! WE'RE GOING TO CRASH!
BY USING EVERY OUNCE OF HIS SKILL, CONDOR MANAGED TO PULL THE SPACE-SHIP OUT OF ITS DIVE WHEN IT WAS BARELY SKIMMING THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS OF MIMAS
PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE. I WONDER WHAT'LL HAPPEN NEXT!

CONDOR SPOTTED THE ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY ON THE HORIZON. AT THE SAME MOMENT ONE OF HIS MEN LET OUT A SHOUT OF AMAZEMENT
LOOK, CAPTAIN! WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS? THEY SEEM LIKE BIRDS -- YET THEY CAN'T BE, BECAUSE MIMAS HAS NO ATMOSPHERE
THE FLYING OBJECTS SOARED ABOVE THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS, AND THEN SWUNG IN A VAST FLOCK TOWARDS THE SPACE-SHIP. THEY LOOKED VERY MUCH LIKE GIGANTIC HUMAN BEINGS WITH WINGS. BUT WHEN THEY CAME CLOSER, CONDOR COULD TELL THAT THEY WERE NOT ALIVE. THEY WERE MECHANICAL MEN!
THEY'RE ATTACKING US! MAN THE GUNS!
CONDOR'S MEN SHOT DOWN DOZENS OF THE METAL MONSTERS. YET THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM THAT IT SEEMED TO MAKE NO DIFFERENCE. AND THEN --
WATCH OUT! THIS ONE'S GOING TO RAM US! FIRE!
A DIRECT HIT BLEW THE MECHANICAL MAN TO BITS
CONDOR REALISED HE WAS OUTNUMBERED BY THE MACHINES, AND THAT THEY WERE DIRECTED BY REMOTE CONTROL FROM THE OBSERVATORY. SO ---
WE'LL MAKE A RUN FOR ONE OF THOSE VALLEYS WHERE WE CANNOT BE SEEN FROM THE OBSERVATORY. DON YOUR SPACE-SUITS AND OXYGEN KITS, AND STAND BY TO TAKE TO THE SPACE-BOATS. I'LL SET THE SHIP TO LAND BY AUTOMATIC CONTROL
THE SPACE-SHIP SLID OUT OF VIEW OF THE MEN IN THE OBSERVATORY. INSTANTLY THE ATTACK BY THE MACHINES CAME TO A STOP
AS THE SPACE-SHIP WENT ON TO LAND BY AUTOMATIC CONTROL, CONDOR AND HIS PALS QUITTED IT IN THEIR SPACE-BOATS
FROM THE MOUTH OF A CAVE, CONDOR AND HIS CREW WATCHED THEIR SPACE-SHIP. THEY SAW TWO MEN IN CARS DRAW UP ALONGSIDE IT AND STEP OUT. THEY WERE FOLLOWED BY STRANGE METAL FIGURES
THEY SOON FOUND OUT WHERE WE'D LANDED. WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF 'EM, CAPTAIN?
THOSE TWO FELLOWS HAVE BROUGHT ALONG A SQUAD OF MECHANICAL ROBOTS TO DEAL WITH US

ONE OF THE TWO MEN SEARCHED THE SPACE-SHIP, THEN RETURNED TO THE DOORWAY
NOT A SOUL ABOARD. CONDOR AND HIS CREW MUST HAVE TAKEN TO THE MOUNTAINS. SHALL WE ROUT 'EM OUT ?
NO. OUR ORDERS WERE TO EXAMINE THE SHIP AND REPORT BACK TO THE OBSERVATORY
THE MEN AND THE ROBOTS RETURNED TO THE CARS AND DROVE AWAY. INSTANTLY CONDOR AND BUTCH, HIS SECOND IN COMMAND, SCRAMBLED INTO THE CRATER AND EXAMINED ONE OF THE MACHINES PREVIOUSLY SHOT DOWN
IF WE CAN REPAIR IT, IT MAY HELP US TO FIND PETE AND THE REST OF THE MISSING CREW. I'LL GO INSIDE AND HAVE A LOOK AT THE WORKS
I'VE FOUND THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO SWITCH OFF THE RADIO CONTROL, AND PILOT THE MACHINE MYSELF. KEEP WATCH WHILE I REPAIR IT, BUTCH
AYE, AYE, CAPTAIN!
HALF AN HOUR LATER - - -
I'VE GOT THIS THING TAPED, I'M GOING TO USE IT TO GET INSIDE THE OBSERVATORY. THAT'S THE PLACE TO OBTAIN NEWS OF PETE AND HIS CREW. YOU TAKE COMMAND IN THE CAVE UNTIL I COME BACK
FROM THE CLIFF CAVE CONDOR'S MEN WATCHED HIM TAKE OFF
THE BEST OF LUCK!
IF ANYONE CAN FIND PETE, IT'S CAPTAIN CONDOR
A HORDE OF MACHINES CIRCLED THE AIR ABOVE THE OBSERVATORY. CONDOR JOINED THEM, AND SEEING SOME SWOOP TO A DARK OPENING, HE FOLLOWED THEM
THIS LOOKS LIKE THE WAY IN. HERE GOES!
CONDOR FOUND HIMSELF AMONGST OTHER MACHINES IN A HUGE HANGAR. THERE WAS ONLY ONE HUMAN GUARD IN THE PLACE. SILENTLY CONDOR OPENED THE DOOR, DREW A PISTOL, AND GLIDED TOWARDS HIM
NEXT MOMENT, THE GUARD GOT THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE
I'M CAPTAIN CONDOR. WHAT HAVE THEY DONE WITH MY MEN? TALK FAST
C-C-CONDOR ? HOW DID YOU GET HERE ? ALL RIGHT, I'LL TELL YOU. THEY'RE IN THE CAGES ON THE NEXT FLOOR DOWN

CONDOR LOCKED THE GUARD INSIDE ONE OF THE MACHINES AFTER REMOVING PART OF THE MECHANISM SO THAT IT COULDN'T BE OPERATED
YOU'LL BE SAFE IN THERE, MY FRIEND
THE DARING OUTLAW THEN CREPT DOWN THE STAIRS TO THE FLOOR BELOW, AND THERE HE FOUND HIS MISSING PALS! HARDLY HAD THEY RECOGNISED HIM THAN PETE LET OUT A YELL OF WARNING
CAPTAIN! TURN ROUND -- QUICK!
CONDOR WHIRLED -- TO FIND A ROBOT GUARD STALKING HIM! THE OUTLAW LEVELLED HIS RAY-GUN, AND ---
HOLD THAT, YOU METAL THUG!
BRAVO, CAPTAIN! YOU'LL FIND THE KEY TO OUR CAGE HANGING FROM HIS WAIST SWIVEL
SWIFTLY CONDOR RELEASED HIS MEN. THEY WERE OVERJOYED AT BEING SET FREE
WE KNEW YOU'D COME TO OUR RESCUE, CAPTAIN
THE PROBLEM NOW IS TO GET YOU BACK TO ZOR!
PETE HAD URGENT NEWS FOR THE CAPTAIN
THE DICTATOR'S MEN CAPTURED OUR SPACE-SHIP. THEY INTEND TO SEND IT BACK TO ZOR LOADED WITH ROBOT TROOPS. THEY'LL WIPE OUT ALL OUR LADS IN NEXT TO NO TIME
NOT IF I KNOW IT. LEAD ME TO THE CONTROL ROOM!
ON THE WAY TO THE CONTROL ROOM, PETE HALTED BY A WINDOW AND POINTED IN ALARM
THEY'RE GETTING READY TO LEAVE ALREADY! WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM

CONDOR AND HIS PALS BURST INTO THE CONTROL ROOM, TAKING THE COMMANDER AND HIS MEN BY SURPRISE.
HOLD IT, EVERYBODY!
IT'S CONDOR! HOW DID HE GET HERE?
WHO SET HIS MEN FREE?
THE COMMANDER SNATCHED UP A MICROPHONE AND BELLOWED ORDERS TO THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THE EMBARKING ROBOT TROOPS.
TAKE OFF FOR ZOR AT ONCE! CONDOR IS HERE.
CONDOR SNATCHED THE MIKE FROM THE COMMANDER'S HAND. BUT THE SPACE-SHIP WAS ALREADY MOVING.
WE'LL SEE THAT IT NEVER REACHES ZOR. PETE, HOLD THIS GUY UP WITH A GUN WHILE I HAVE A LOOK AT THE CONTROL PANEL.
H'M! NOW IF I REVERSE THE EFFECT OF THE MAIN TRANSMITTER, THE RESULT SHOULD BE VERY INTERESTING.
HURRY UP, CAPTAIN, OR THE SPACE-SHIP WILL BE OUT OF RANGE!
BEING A SKILLED ENGINEER, IT DIDN'T TAKE CAPTAIN CONDOR LONG TO MAKE THE ADJUSTMENTS HE HAD IN MIND. THEN HE PULLED DOWN A SWITCH AND —
STOP, YOU FOOL!
GOSH, CAPTAIN, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
REVERSED THE OPERATION OF THE VORTEX. INSTEAD OF DRAGGING EVERYTHING TOWARDS MIMAS, IT IS TRYING TO FORCE EVERYTHING AWAY!

ROTATING THE CONTROLS, CONDOR DIRECTED THE WHIRLPOOL OF FORCE AT THE ESCAPING SPACE-SHIP WITH ITS LOAD OF ROBOT TROOPS. ALMOST INSTANTLY THE CRAFT BROKE INTO PIECES
TRIUMPHANTLY CONDOR PREPARED TO LEAVE THE CONTROL ROOM
IT'S ALL RIGHT, COMMANDER, I'M NOT GOING TO KILL YOU. I'M NO MURDERER, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR BOSS, THE DICTATOR, MAY SAY. BUT LET THIS BE A LESSON TO YOU—NEVER INTERFERE WITH ANY OF MY MEN AGAIN!
AS SOON AS CONDOR HAD GONE, THE COMMANDER RUSHED TO THE GENERATORS
CONDOR HAS JAMMED THE CONTROLS! QUICK! GET OUT BEFORE THE VORTEX TEARS THE WHOLE PLACE APART!
THE CAPTAIN LED HIS RESCUED MEN BACK TO THE CRATER, WHERE BUTCH AND THE OTHERS STOOD GUARDING THE SPACE-SHIP WHICH CONDOR HAD PILOTED TO MIMAS
GOOD OLD PETE! GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN. EVERYTHING O.K.?
SURE, BUTCH — THANKS TO THE CAPTAIN, HE'S A MARVEL!
JUMP ABOARD, BOYS, IT'S FIRST STOP IOR FOR US
AS THE SPACE-SHIP TOOK OFF, HEADING BACK TO SAFETY, MIMAS WAS SHAKEN BY A TITANIC EXPLOSION. THE WHIRLING VORTEX HAD NOT ONLY WRECKED ITS OWN GENERATORS, BUT DRAGGED HALF THE LABORATORY TOWARDS IT!
THAT'S THE END OF YOUR "HOLE IN SPACE", PETE
SURE, CAPTAIN, AND OF ONE MORE ATTEMPT BY THE DICTATOR TO GET THE BETTER OF CAPTAIN CONDOR!

THE TREE THAT STOPPED A REBELLION

By Edwin Dale

ZULUS ON THE WARPATH!

FOREIGN stamps? Yes, I've always been interested in them. Stamps turn a place from just a name on a map into somewhere that really exists.

By the way, I call myself "Mr. X"—I can't give you my real name for security reasons.

Now, I've collected stamps from all corners of the globe during my travels. And, amazingly enough, the small magnifying-glass I carry in my pocket, and which I use to examine stamps, once saved my life in South Africa.

I'll tell you how it all came about, if you like.

I was flying over South Africa to the Cape, in my own little single-seater plane. I had wandered quite a long way off the regular air-route to the Cape. Getting off the "beaten track" is a little habit of mine—and one that sometimes gets me into trouble.

It did on this occasion.

I was flying over a vast expanse of veldt, or open country, when suddenly I saw something rare on the South African veldt—a small cluster of trees! Trees are so few out there that the wandering bands of Kaffirs and Zulus who inhabit that part of the world are inclined to look upon them with superstitious awe.

I circled once around those trees—just out of idle curiosity—and then stared hard.

A number of motionless, brown bodies lay scattered around in the tall grass near the trees. It soon dawned upon me that they were dead animals. Puzzled, I swooped down to almost grass level to take a closer look at them—wondering what kind of a plague had taken its toll of the wild beasts.

Imagine my surprise when I saw that the scattered corpses were really domestic cattle—and too healthy-looking to have been owned by natives. Obviously they had come from a white man's settlement nearby.

Strange Adventures in the African Wilds with the Thrill-Seeking Mr. X

I started looking round for the settlement—and then saw something which made me realise that it was no epidemic which had brought death to the large herd.

Straight in front of my whirling airscrew there was a magnificent longhorn bull, lying lifeless on its side—with a tufted assegai sticking from its throat.

An assegai, as you probably know, is a Kaffir throwing-spear, made of the wood of the assegai tree.

I knew, then, that I had hit upon serious trouble. Most Kaffirs and Zulus are now peaceful and law-abiding, but there are still a few wild tribes at large in the vast veldt, living as outlaws, under the rule of their own appointed King—who is usually a cross between a cut-throat brigand and a primitive savage.

As I saw that assegai-slain bull lying there, an age-old Kaffir legend flashed to my mind. Many years ago, the Kaffir-Zulus had believed that when they had killed every head of cattle that the white man possessed, then all the ancient warriors of their tribes would rise out of the sea, and help to drive the white men from the country.

Suddenly I sat bolt upright in my seat!

As if by magic, from out of the grass in front of me, several hundreds of black-skinned Zulus had appeared, waving assegais, knobkerries and plaited shields!

And I didn't have to look twice to see that they weren't waving them at me in welcome! Although the roar of my engine drowned their yells, I could see that they were hurling war-cries and words of hatred up at me. They were a huge band of Zulus, on the warpath!

And, although most of them were carrying the primitive weapons of their forefathers, some were armed with rifles!

Stabs of fire came from the rifles, and bullets whistled, like angry bees, past my cockpit. The range was so close that it didn't seem possible for any of those bullets to miss me.

In a flash I pulled the control-wheel back hard, and gave the engine the gun!

But it was too late!

I felt the plane shudder beneath me. I heard my engine cough and splutter. My heart missed a beat.

And then it missed another beat, as warm petrol splattered back into my face. Instinctively I "cut" my engine—hoping to be able to glide round, land, and then attempt to talk sense into the Zulus, who seemed to have forgotten that this was the twentieth century.

But, at that moment, my heart missed several more beats in rapid succession. The rudder-bar had gone limp beneath my feet!

And I was heading straight for the centre of the cluster of trees which I had come down from out of the blue African sky to take a closer look at.

It seemed that nothing short of a miracle could save me from crashing head-on into those trees—the only clump of trees for hundreds of miles of sweeping veldt!

I've laughed about that hundreds of times—since! But I can assure you that I didn't laugh at the time. If ever I felt that Mr. X was having his last adventure, it was then.

My plane seemed to be standing still, poised in the air, with that cluster of trees racing to meet it at express train speed.

I didn't realise at first that my crippled plane was responding all the time to its wing elevators. Suddenly the trunks of the trees seemed to descend into the ground, leaving only their leafy tops spreading out rapidly in front of me.

There was a shuddering jolt, as my plane flopped into the tree-tops, and I was hurled forward, until it felt that I was being torn in half by my safety-belt.

An old saying states that it's better to be born lucky than rich; well, I'm not rich, but I was still alive! Though I couldn't help wondering what sort of a reception I was going to get from those hostile Zulus!

A SHOT IN A MILLION

MY little plane, with its wings and fuselage torn to shreds, was securely wedged among the tree-tops, some fifteen feet from the ground. I wasted no time in clambering from the cockpit, and swarming down the nearest tree.

I wasn't very clever in choosing my tree. A broken branch had pierced my petrol tank and, as I hurried towards the ground, escaping petrol came streaming down the tree trunk and on to the top of my head like a miniature waterfall.

If my plane had burst into flames at that moment the tree, and me, would have blazed like a torch.

Apparently I had stopped the engine quickly enough to avert a fire, and so I reached the ground and dodged into cover still all in one piece. But I felt as though I'd jumped out of a frying-pan into the fire.

Those Zulus—hundreds of them—had started performing a weird and terrible war-dance around the cluster of trees!

I can speak quite a lot of languages, and the Kaffir "taal" happens to be one of them. As they danced, the Zulus chanted about the wonderful prowess of their Great King Charka, and how all black men obeyed his will, and all white men feared his power.

The Great Charka was there in person, standing like a stone image just inside the circle. He wore a heavy iron ring upon his head as an emblem of chieftainship, and a magnificent lion skin hung from his left shoulder. In his right hand he carried a long, massive assegai, and a great uncut diamond, suspended from a chain of lions' teeth, glittered on his enormous chest.

For the moment Charka seemed to enjoy the song of praise which was being chanted in his honour, and then, slowly, he lifted his massive spear.

Almost instantly the sky became blotted from my view by flying assegais. They thudded to the ground all around me, and the bark of the tree beneath which

I was crouched was soon bristling like the back of a porcupine.

By a stroke of good luck I had made a good choice of cover. Although some of the broad spear points quivered into the ground almost touching me, I escaped unscatched from that avalanche of death The Zulus seemed a bit shaken by this, and those armed with rifles began blazing away at me.

But where their assegais couldn't reach their bullets couldn't either.

I lay behind the tree, wondering why the Zulus were keeping their distance, wasting their energy and their bullets, when they could have just closed in on me My own six-gun would have scarcely made any impression upon them.

Slowly, it began to dawn upon me that it wasn't my gun that they were scared of—it was the trees! You remember I told you that trees are so scarce in that part of Africa that the Zulus treat them with superstitious awe.

While I remained among the trees, I was safe.

It was a sort of stalemate. But it didn't suit me I knew how patient the Zulus could be They would keep the trees encircled, day in and day out, until I was forced to leave, or starve!

After quite a lot of thought, I decided to try an experiment—with my six-gun!

I am considered a very good shot with a revolver—but the shot which I was now contemplating was one that would call for perhaps even more skill than I could muster.

The target at which I was going to aim was only a fraction of an inch away from King Charka's evil heart. If my bullet killed the Zulu King it might start a blood thirsty uprising which would spread like a forest fire through the African jungle.

Gingerly I pressed the muzzle of my six-gun through the thick grass at the base of the tree King Charka was some forty yards away, standing sideways to me.

Then I set my jaws, held my breath, aimed across the Zulu King's chest—and squeezed the trigger!

Crack!

The vicious bark of my six-gun turned the tribesmen's chanting into gasps of awe and amazement. Every black man stared at something spinning away from King Charka's mighty chest, glittering like liquid fire in the sunlight!

It was the great uncut diamond which he had worn, dangling against his chest. My bullet had cut clean through the lion's teeth chain without even grazing the evil King Charka's chest!

I had reckoned that if my shot was successful it would shake the natives badly, but I hadn't bargained for the actual effect that it had on them. Apparently they didn't give me credit for what had happened—they believed that it was the work of the trees!

In one large bunch, those Zulu warriors promptly turned, and ran for the distant skyline as if the crack of my revolver had signalled the start of a marathon race.

King Charka stood for a moment staring after them in motionless silence. Then, throwing one glance of mingled defiance and superstitious terror at the cluster of trees, he stooped, picked up the uncut diamond, and then strode after his fleeing tribesmen.

I heaved a heartfelt sigh of relief, believing that I was seeing the last of King Charka and his outlaw Zulus.

But I was wrong.

There was nothing that I could do about my wrecked 'plane, and so I decided to search for the white settlement to which the slain cattle obviously belonged

Out in the wide open spaces, domesticated cattle usually graze to windward of the settlement, so that they can sniff the scents of their two-legged friends and protectors After walking for about five miles into a faint breeze, I came at last to a cluster of wooden huts. Beyond them was a huge paddock containing fully a hundred magnificent ostriches, and a long row of incubation sheds, with their smaller wired-off runs.

The slain cattle, then, belonged to an ostrich farmer.

As I approached the homestead, an elderly man came out to meet me. He informed me his name was Walter Stern, and that he ran the ostrich farm with the help of his four sons

He already knew about his slain cattle

"Those black outlaws know that without cattle we cannot stay here," he said bitterly. "They want to starve us out, so that they can have our land"

"But, surely!" I gasped, "if you report this to the authorities, they'll soon send a troop-carrier out here with enough soldiers aboard to round up King Charka and his whole tribe. Have you sent for help?"

The old farmer shook his head.

"King Charka has stolen all my horses so that his men can keep watch on the farm and prevent any of my sons from riding for help!"

It was clear that King Charka meant business. That was why he didn't welcome my sudden appearance upon the scene in a 'plane. He'd got to be taught a lesson that he wouldn't forget in a hurry.

But what could I do to help Walter Stern? He and his sons were in a tough spot—and, as far as I could see, I was now in it with them, right up to my neck.

No horses—my 'plane hopelessly wrecked!

But surely there was some way to get an S.O.S. through to the authorities?

At that moment I spotted a strange-looking saddle and bridle hanging upon the wall of the homestead.

"That's an ostrich saddle, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yes, my sons do a little ostrich-racing for sport," answered Walter Stern. "Several of our birds have been trained to the saddle!"

That gave me a brainwave—just when I needed one.

"Then tell them to saddle-up their fastest bird!" I said. "An ostrich can beat any horse for speed; and the Zulus on your stolen horses won't be able to

head me off on the skyline because I won't be riding as far as that! There's a radio in the cockpit of my 'plane, and I can use that to send out an S.O.S. for help."

Soon I was speeding over the veldt on an ostrich, my unusual mount's spindly legs travelling through the tall grass at a fantastic speed.

On the skyline I could see a dozen mounted Zulus, converging to cut off my escape. But that didn't worry me. It was only five miles to my wrecked 'plane, and once that I was in the middle of the cluster of trees into which the 'plane had crashed, those Zulus wouldn't dare to approach.

I considered that Walter Stern and his ostrich farm were already as good as saved from King Charka. But then—

Usually an ostrich is even more sure-footed than a horse Maybe it was my fault—because I wasn't used to riding an ostrich. Anyway—plump went one of my ostrich's ungainly two-toed feet into a hole, and down he went!

And down I went, too—rammed my head on a rock with such force that I was knocked out, stone cold!

RESCUED BY A TREE!

THE next thing I remember was finding myself suspended horizontally by my wrists and ankles from a stout spear held by two burly Zulus.

It was a most uncomfortable journey for me, all the way to the tribe's kraal—situated in the depth of a rocky valley.

King Charka's eyes lit up in evil anticipation as he saw me. He hadn't forgiven me for shooting that stone off his chain of lion's teeth. The diamond was back there again now—but I could see from the expression on his brutal face that it would never again mean as much to him as it had done before.

A picture of rage, King Charka paraded his whole army, and then had me dragged before him.

"Ever heard of the White Man's vengeance, King Charka?" I demanded calmly.

"Pah!" the Zulu King boomed. "King Charka is greater than all the white men who have invaded these lands."

I saw my chance for a dig at his pride, which I realised would be his weak spot.

"Then you must be great indeed!" I replied. "For did not your entire army flee in terror from one single white man when I shot that diamond from your lion's teeth chain? But you're not as brave as you pretend to be, King Charka. You wouldn't dare to allow your warriors to hurt a hair on my head if that tree was standing here beside me now!"

I could see that my words were stinging King Charka like a whip-lash. It was for that reason that he swallowed my bait whole. I could make very good use of that tree.

He swung suddenly upon his warriors.

"I, your King, will prove that this white man lies! he roared. "My six captains will go and cut down the tree behind which this white man hid from your assegais and bullets. They will bring it to me here—and if any one of them refuses to do so, then I shall have him strapped to an ant hill!"

The six captains clearly didn't like the task which had been assigned to them, but their fear of being eaten alive by ants proved to be greater than their superstitious fear of the tree. Half-an-hour later they reappeared, sweating in the hot midday sun, as they staggered beneath the weight of the tree

Taking deliberate aim with his revolver, Mr. X fired—and the bullet severed a huge diamond from its chain around the Zulu chief's neck It was part of Mr. X's scheme to escape from the rebels.

At an order from King Charka, a hole was dug beside me, and the hewn stump of the tree was planted in it

The Zulu chief then turned with an evil grin, and cut the ropes which bound me.

"There is your tree, white man," he sneered. "Hide behind it, and if you again survive my warriors' assegais, your life will be spared!"

I approached the tree, sniffing anxiously. To my relief the Zulu captains had brought the self same tree behind which I had hidden before I knew this from the strong smell of petrol that came from it!

As I stood behind it I brought from my pocket a small, but powerful, magnifying glass. I was pinning my hopes of escape on this

With the pursuing Zulus close on his trail, Mr X urged the ostrich to run faster. Suddenly disaster struck. His strange mount tripped and fell, throwing the daring adventurer clean over its head!

Holding the glass encircled in the thumb and forefinger of my right hand, I made sure that the rest of my hand would shield it from King Charka's view. I tilted the glass until the strong African sun was gleaming directly through the lens and on to a patch of bark, which had been well saturated with petrol from my wrecked plane's tank.

And then I waited breathlessly—wondering whether the sun would do its work in time to save my life!

King Charka, with a cruel smile curving his thick lips, was placing his warriors in a semi-circle in front of the tree.

This time I would have no other trees to either side of me for protection. When Charka gave the signal for the assegais to be thrown, I could not hope to survive.

Gloatingly, King Charka raised his own mighty assegai above his head. The other Zulus poised their assegais, awaiting the signal to throw.

"Now, white man, show your cunning and cleverness!" sneered King Charka. "Call upon the spirit of the tree to save you!"

I saw a little curl of blue smoke arising from the bark of the tree, barely an inch from my eyes.

"If you wish me to bring the spirit of the tree to my aid, King Charka, then I will do so!" I cried. "But before you give the signal for your warriors to throw their assegais, turn your eyes up towards the Great Ball of Fire in the sky—for it may be for the last time!"

I was, of course, speaking to gain time—but I saw Charka and many of his warriors glance, a little fearfully, up towards the sun.

But when King Charka looked down again towards the tree, he started to tremble. A strangled cry rang from his lips.

My magnifying glass had done its work!

The blue coil of smoke had turned into a tiny flame. The flame leapt like a venomous snake up the petrol-soaked tree trunk—and then, as I threw myself clear, the branches above me burst into fire with a mighty roar.

Howling in superstitious terror, the Zulu warriors dropped their assegais and threw themselves flat to the ground. I walked slowly towards King Charka. As I did so, he grovelled, shaking with fear, and covering his face with both hands.

"Keep your head bowed, O fool!" I cried. "You have offended the spirit of the tree by trying to spill a white man's blood upon it! Now, unless you want to suffer the same fate as the tree, you must solemnly vow that never again will you, or any of your warriors, make trouble for the white man!"

King Charka cringed like a whipped dog.

"I vow it!" he whined, "in the name of my ancestors! I vow, too, that cattle belonging to my tribe shall be given to the white man who breeds ostriches, to replace those that my warriors have slain!"

"See that this is done, King Charka—for your own sake!" I rapped.

And then, collecting Walter Stern's horses from the kraal, I set out across the veldt to the settlement, leaving the tree still burning in front of the prostrated Zulu warriors.

I've since learnt that the burnt stump of that tree still stands in the kraal—acting as a constant reminder to King Charka and his tribe of what happens when they fail to keep the peace.

When I arrived at Stern's farm, Stern and his sons stared in amazement at their horses, and then at me.

They were overjoyed at the defeat of Charka.

My own souvenir of the occasion is the magnifying glass that saved my life!

SANDY DEAN'S PRIZE GUY

By BARRY NELSON

ALL THE BOYS AT TOLLGATE SCHOOL WERE EAGERLY LOOKING FORWARD TO CELEBRATING THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER THE HEADMASTER HAD ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD PRESENT A BUMPER BOX OF FIREWORKS TO WHOEVER MADE THE BEST GUY. SANDY DEAN AND HIS PALS OF THE FOURTH FORM WERE VERY KEEN ON WINNING THE PRIZE SO KEEN, IN FACT, THAT EARLY ON THE MORNING OF THE FIFTH, SANDY AND OWL WATSON HAD RISKED BREAKING BOUNDS

CARRYING A LARGE BASKET BETWEEN THEM, SANDY AND OWL HURRIED BACK TOWARDS THE SCHOOL THEY HALTED OUTSIDE THE WALL
JACK SAID HE'D BE WAITING FOR US HERE. I HOPE TO GOODNESS HE TURNS UP, SANDY
JACK WOULD NEVER LET US DOWN. GIVE HIM A WHISTLE

AT OWL'S WHISTLE, JACK HARDY'S GRINNING FACE APPEARED OVER THE WALL
ALL CLEAR, CHAPS! HERE'S THE ROPE. WE'LL HOIST THE BASKET INSIDE BEFORE THERE'S ANYONE ABOUT. WE DON'T WANT IT TO BE SPOTTED
I DON'T WANT US TO BE SPOTTED, EITHER, JACK! I'D TAKE A POOR VIEW OF BEING PUT INTO DETENTION ON NOV. 5TH!

IT WAS A MOMENT LATER THAT, INSIDE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS, THREE BOYS CAME TO A HALT. THEY WERE BOSSY BATES, THE FOURTH-FORM BULLY, AND HIS TWO CRONIES, SPIDER JESSOP AND GUS TREVOR
HELLO, HELLO! WHAT'S GOING ON? THREE FELLOWS SNEAKING IN OVER THE WALL!
IT'S SANDY DEAN AND CO. THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING FISHY. LET'S KEEP WATCH ON THEM. WE MAY BE ABLE TO DO OURSELVES A BIT OF GOOD!

UNAWARE THAT THEY WERE BEING FOLLOWED, SANDY AND CO. CARRIED THE BASKET TO A GARDENER'S SHED
IF WE GET CRACKING AT ONCE, WE'LL FINISH THE JOB BEFORE OUR FIRST LESSON
THE HEAD'S PRIZE IS AS GOOD AS OURS ALREADY!

INSIDE THE SHED, THE PALS OPENED THE BASKET AND SANDY LIFTED OUT OF IT -- A TAILOR'S DUMMY!
ISN'T IT A BEAUTY? I PICKED IT UP DIRT CHEAP, TOO
IT'LL MAKE A MARVELLOUS GUY. TRUST YOU TO THINK OF A BRAINWAVE LIKE THIS, SANDY!

BOSSY AND CO. CREPT UP TO THE SHED AND PEERED CURIOUSLY THROUGH THE WINDOW
PHEW! SEE THAT, YOU CHAPS? THEY'RE DRESSING UP AN OLD TAILOR'S DUMMY TO USE AS A GUY!
THEY'RE CERTAIN TO WIN THE HEAD'S PRIZE!
NOT IF I KNOW IT! WE'LL SCUPPER THEIR LITTLE GAME NOW WE KNOW WHAT THEY'RE UP TO!

WHEN THE GUY WAS READY, SANDY AND CO. GAZED AT IT WITH PRIDE
THERE WE ARE, ME LUCKY LADS--FINISHED JUST IN TIME
AND THERE GOES THE BELL FOR FIRST LESSONS. WE'D BETTER BEAT IT

LITTLE DID SANDY AND CO KNOW THAT BOSSY BATES WAS PLOTTING AGAINST THEM WITH THE BOOT-BOY
IF YOU'LL DO WHAT I'VE SAID, I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE BOB FOR YOURSELF
O.K. I'M ALWAYS READY TO EARN A BIT ON THE SIDE

THE FOURTH-FORMERS WERE SO EXCITED ABOUT THE GUY FAWKES COMPETITION THAT NONE OF THEM PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO LESSONS THAT MORNING. BUT AT LAST LESSONS CAME TO AN END, AND SANDY AND CO HURRIED BACK TO THE GARDENER'S SHED

TO THEIR SURPRISE, THEY FOUND DR STANTON, THE HEADMASTER, STANDING OUTSIDE THE SHED
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT YOU BOYS WERE DOING SOMETHING IN HERE THIS MORNING. I WISH TO SEE WHAT YOU HAVE HIDDEN HERE
CERTAINLY, SIR

SANDY PULLED ASIDE THE DUST-SHEET -- THEN STAGGERED BACK WITH AMAZEMENT
HOW THE - WHAT THE ---
MY STARS! THAT ISN'T THE GUY WE LEFT HERE!
OUR HEADMASTER! COME AND WATCH HIM GO UP IN SMOKE!
BLESS MY SOUL! THIS - THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS. AND - AND YOU'VE DARED TO USE MY BEST GOWN AND MORTAR BOARD!

DESPERATELY SANDY TRIED TO EXPLAIN THAT THEIR OWN GUY HAD VANISHED, AND THAT THIS ONE HAD BEEN PUT IN ITS PLACE. BUT THE HEAD CUT HIM SHORT
IN ALL MY EXPERIENCE AS A SCHOOLMASTER, NO BOY HAS EVER DARED TO INSULT ME LIKE THIS
THE HEAD CALLED TO THE BOOT-BOY, WHO HAPPENED TO BE PASSING
REMOVE THIS DISGRACEFUL OBJECT AT ONCE! PUT IT INTO THE INCINERATOR AND BURN IT!
YES, SIR!
THE HEAD THEN TURNED TO SANDY AND CO.
WE'RE NOT TO BLAME, SIR WE --
SILENCE, DEAN! I WILL ACCEPT NO EXCUSES. YOU THREE BOYS ARE GATED, AND YOU WILL GO INTO THE DETENTION ROOM BOTH THIS AFTERNOON AND EVENING
GOSH! THAT MEANS WE MISS THE FIREWORKS ALTOGETHER!
FILLED WITH ANGER AT THE WAY SOMEONE HAD TRICKED THEM, SANDY AND CO. WENT TO THEIR STUDY
WHO THE DICKENS COULD HAVE COLLARED OUR GUY AND PUT THAT OTHER ONE IN THE SHED?
THE ONLY CHAP LIKELY TO DO A DIRTY TRICK LIKE THIS IS BOSSY BATES I'M CERTAIN HE'S THE CULPRIT
THEN LET'S FOLLOW HIM EVERYWHERE HE GOES. IF HE'S GOT OUR GUY, HE'S SURE TO BRING IT OUT IN TIME FOR THE COMPETITION
SANDY AND CO. SAW BOSSY AND HIS CRONIES WALK OUT OF THE GATES AFTER DINNER
I'M SURE THEY'RE THE ONES WHO TRICKED US. ALL THREE ARE GRINNING LIKE CHESHIRE CATS
BUT WE CAN'T SHADOW THEM WE'RE ALMOST DUE TO GO INTO DETENTION
HANG DETENTION -AND THE GATING. I'M GOING AFTER THOSE THREE ROTTERS
SANDY AND CO. ALWAYS STUCK TOGETHER SO, TRAILING THE BULLIES, THEY SAW THEM ENTER A BARN IN A NEARBY FIELD
YOU CAN BET YOUR BOOTS THEY'VE GOT OUR GUY HIDDEN IN THERE!

AND SANDY WAS RIGHT! THE PALS HEARD BOSSY'S VOICE
WHAT A SCREAM, CHAPS! TO THINK THAT WE'LL WIN THE HEAD'S PRIZE BOX OF FIREWORKS WITH SANDY DEAN AND CO'S GUY!
OF ALL THE CHEEK! GET READY TO MOP UP THE GROUND WITH THE THREE ROTTERS!
INSIDE THE BARN, BOSSY AND CO WERE GLOATING
ALL GUYS MUST BE TAKEN ALONG TO THE GYM FOR THE JUDGING TO TAKE PLACE. WE PASS THE DETENTION ROOM WINDOWS ON THE WAY, SO WE'LL LET DEAN AND HIS PALS SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEIR GUY AFTER THAT WE'LL SPOIL ALL THE OTHER GUYS IN THE COMPETITION
GOOD SHOW, BOSSY!
SANDY AND CO WERE WAITING FOR BOSSY AND HIS CRONIES TO COME OUT OF THE BARN WHEN SOMEONE ELSE ARRIVED ON THE SCENE. IT WAS HAUGHTY HAWKINS--A PREFECT!
WHAT ARE YOU THREE DOING HERE? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN DETENTION! FOLLOW ME BACK TO THE SCHOOL AT ONCE AND YOU'LL WRITE ME A HUNDRED LINES APIECE!
HAUGHTY SAW THE PALS SAFELY INTO DETENTION, AND GRIMLY WARNED THEM NOT TO LEAVE THE ROOM
MR STIGGINS IS ON DETENTION DUTY THIS AFTERNOON HE WILL BE HERE IN A FEW MINUTES. YOU'D BETTER BEHAVE YOURSELVES, FOR HE ISN'T THE SORT TO STAND ANY NONSENSE
AS SOON AS HAUGHTY HAD GONE, SANDY TURNED TO HIS CHUMS WITH A CHUCKLE
CHEER UP, CHAPS. WE AREN'T BEATEN YET WHEN BOSSY AND CO. BRING OUR GUY ALONG THE PATH OUTSIDE, WE'LL GIVE 'EM THE SHOCK OF THEIR LIVES!
MR. STIGGINS HAD NOT YET ARRIVED WHEN SANDY AND CO. HEARD A TAP ON ONE OF THE WINDOWS
THERE'S BOSSY. GET READY FOR ACTION!
OPEN UP! I'VE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU ROTTERS
THE PALS PEERED OUT OF THE WINDOW -- AND SAW THEIR GUY IN THE HANDS OF BOSSY AND CO.
HOW'S THIS FOR A GUY? DON'T YOU WISH IT WAS YOURS?
WE'RE GOING TO WIN THE PRIZE WITH IT. HA, HA, HA!

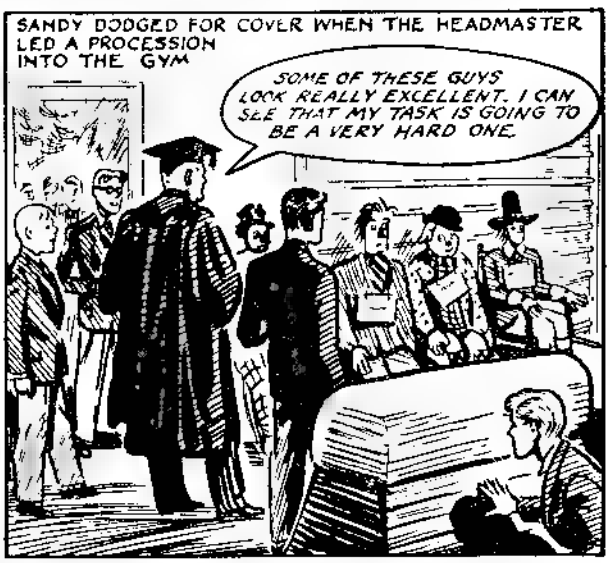
AND THEN SANDY AND CO. WENT INTO ACTION!
WHAT THE - GUG! GUG!
THEY - THEY'RE USING WATER PISTOLS! OO - OOSH!
AFTER 'EM, CHAPS! BEAT 'EM UP!
SCARED STIFF, BOSSY AND CO DESERTED THE GUY AND FLEW FOR THEIR LIVES JACK AND OWL GAVE CHASE -- BUT SANDY STAYED BEHIND
IF ONLY MY LUCK HOLDS, WE'LL BE TAKING PART IN THE FIREWORK CELEBRATIONS TO-NIGHT AFTER ALL!
WHILE JACK AND OWL KEPT WATCH FROM A CORNER OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING, SANDY PUSHED THE GUY INTO THE DETENTION ROOM
SO FAR SO GOOD. THE NEXT PART OF MY WHEEZE IS THE TRICKIEST
SWIFTLY SANDY STARTED TO CHANGE CLOTHES WITH THE DUMMY
WHAT A LARK! BUT I'VE STILL TO SPOOF MR STIGGINS, AS WELL AS BOSSY AND CO
BY THE TIME JACK AND OWL CAME SCRAMBLING BACK INTO THE ROOM, THE DUMMY WAS SITTING AT SANDY'S DESK!
HURRY UP, SANDY! OLD STIGGINS IS ALMOST HERE
WISH ME LUCK - I'M ON MY WAY!
LEAVING HIS PALS AND THE DUMMY, SANDY CLIMBED THROUGH THE WINDOW
CHEER-OH, CHAPS! SEE YOU LATER!

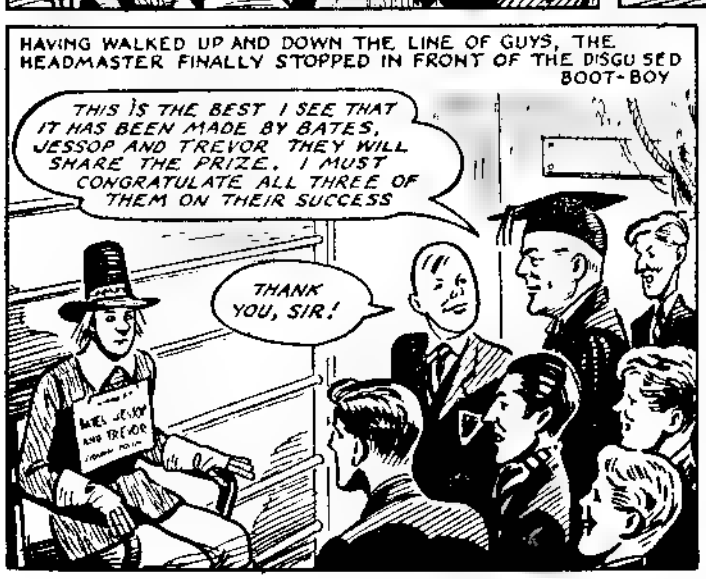
HARDLY HAD SANDY DISAPPEARED THAN MR. STIGGINS, THE SHORT-SIGHTED THIRD-FORM MASTER, LOOKED INTO THE ROOM
HARDY AND WATSON – WHY ARE YOU NOT WORKING? DEAN APPEARS TO BE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BUSY HERE!
ER-SORRY, SIR!
SATISFIED THAT ALL WAS WELL, MR STIGGINS WENT AWAY AGAIN. IMMEDIATELY JACK AND OWL DARTED TO THE WINDOW
BOSSY AND CO. ARE JUST COMING BACK. DO YOU THINK THEY'LL NOTICE THAT SANDY HAS TAKEN THE PLACE OF THE GUY?
NOT THEM! THEY'LL BE IN TOO MUCH OF A HURRY TO RECOVER IT!
AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVED, BOSSY AND HIS PALS PICKED UP WHAT THEY THOUGHT WAS THE GUY
I WISH IT WASN'T SO HEAVY!
WHO CARES SO LONG AS WE WIN THAT BOX OF FIREWORKS?
SANDY WAS CARRIED INTO THE GYMNASIUM. ALL THE OTHER GUYS WERE LINED UP THERE, WAITING TO BE JUDGED BY THE HEADMASTER
SOME OF THESE OTHER GUYS ARE PRETTY GOOD BUT THEY WON'T LOOK MUCH WHEN YOU-KNOW-WHO HAS FINISHED WITH 'EM!
NOT LIKELY WE'LL GET THE PRIZE ALL RIGHT
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK!
BOSSY AND CO. THEN HURRIED OUT OF THE GYM. A MOMENT LATER SOMEONE ELSE CAME SNEAKING IN
IT'S THE BOOT-BOY! SO HE'S HAND-IN-GLOVE WITH BOSSY!
GOING TO THE END OF THE LINE OF GUYS, THE BOOT-BOY SET TO WORK
THIS IS WHERE I EARN THE REST OF THE MONEY BOSSY BATES GAVE ME
AND THIS IS WHERE I BUTT IN!

HEARING A SOUND BEHIND HIM, THE BOOT-BOY TURNED ROUND — THEN STARED IN HORROR
HELP! ONE OF 'EM'S COME TO LIFE!
YES—I'M VERY MUCH ALIVE, YOU TWISTER!

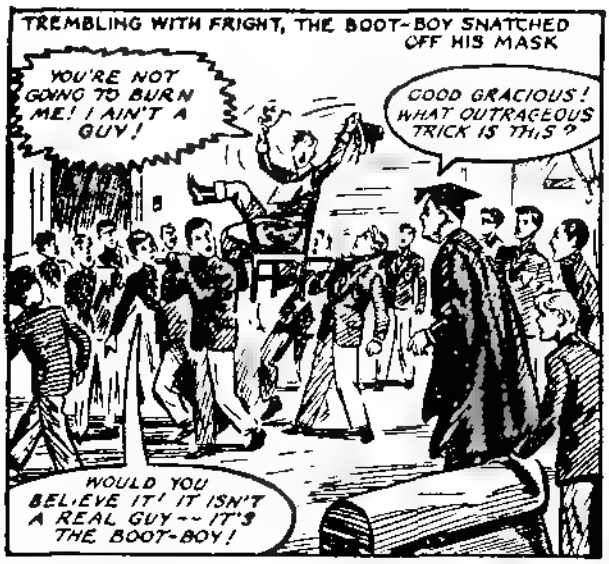
SANDY REMOVED HIS FACE-MASK SO THAT THE BOOT-BOY COULD RECOGNISE HIM
I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR LITTLE GAME. SO NOW YOU'VE TO HELP STRAIGHTEN THINGS OUT FOR A START, YOU'VE TO PUT ON THIS GUY OUTFIT I'M WEARING
Y-YES, MASTER DEAN
MADE BY BATES JESSOP AND TREVOR

THE CHANGE OVER WAS SOON COMPLETED, AND SANDY MADE THE BOOT-BOY CLIMB INTO THE GUY'S CHAIR
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TO SIT PERFECTLY STILL. THE HEAD WILL BE HERE SHORTLY TO JUDGE THE GUYS
MADE BY BATES JESSOP AND TREVOR
FOURTH FORM!


SANDY DODGED FOR COVER WHEN THE HEADMASTER LED A PROCESSION INTO THE GYM
SOME OF THESE GUYS LOOK REALLY EXCELLENT. I CAN SEE THAT MY TASK IS GOING TO BE A VERY HARD ONE.


HAVING WALKED UP AND DOWN THE LINE OF GUYS, THE HEADMASTER FINALLY STOPPED IN FRONT OF THE DISGUISED BOOT-BOY
THIS IS THE BEST I SEE THAT IT HAS BEEN MADE BY BATES, JESSOP AND TREVOR. THEY WILL SHARE THE PRIZE. I MUST CONGRATULATE ALL THREE OF THEM ON THEIR SUCCESS
THANK YOU, SIR!

JUST AS SANDY HAD EXPECTED, THE FOURTH-FORMERS SWOOPED ON THE WINNING GUY
THIS ONE GOES ON THE FIRE FIRST OF ALL
COME AND WATCH HIM BURN, CHAPS!
YOUR GUY IS GOING UP IN SMOKE, BOSSY!


TREMBLING WITH FRIGHT, THE BOOT-BOY SNATCHED OFF HIS MASK
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BURN ME! I AIN'T A GUY!
GOOD GRACIOUS! WHAT OUTRAGEOUS TRICK IS THIS?
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT! IT ISN'T A REAL GUY -- IT'S THE BOOT-BOY!

WHAT IS YOUR EXPLANATION? WHO TOLD YOU TO MEDDLE WITH THE GUYS?
BOSSY BATES PAID ME TO DO IT, SIR. HE GOT ME TO PINCH MASTER DEAN'S GUY, AND TO LEAVE A GUY OF YOURSELF IN ITS PLACE. BOSSY BATES IS THE ONE TO BLAME
THIS PUTS US RIGHT IN THE CLEAR

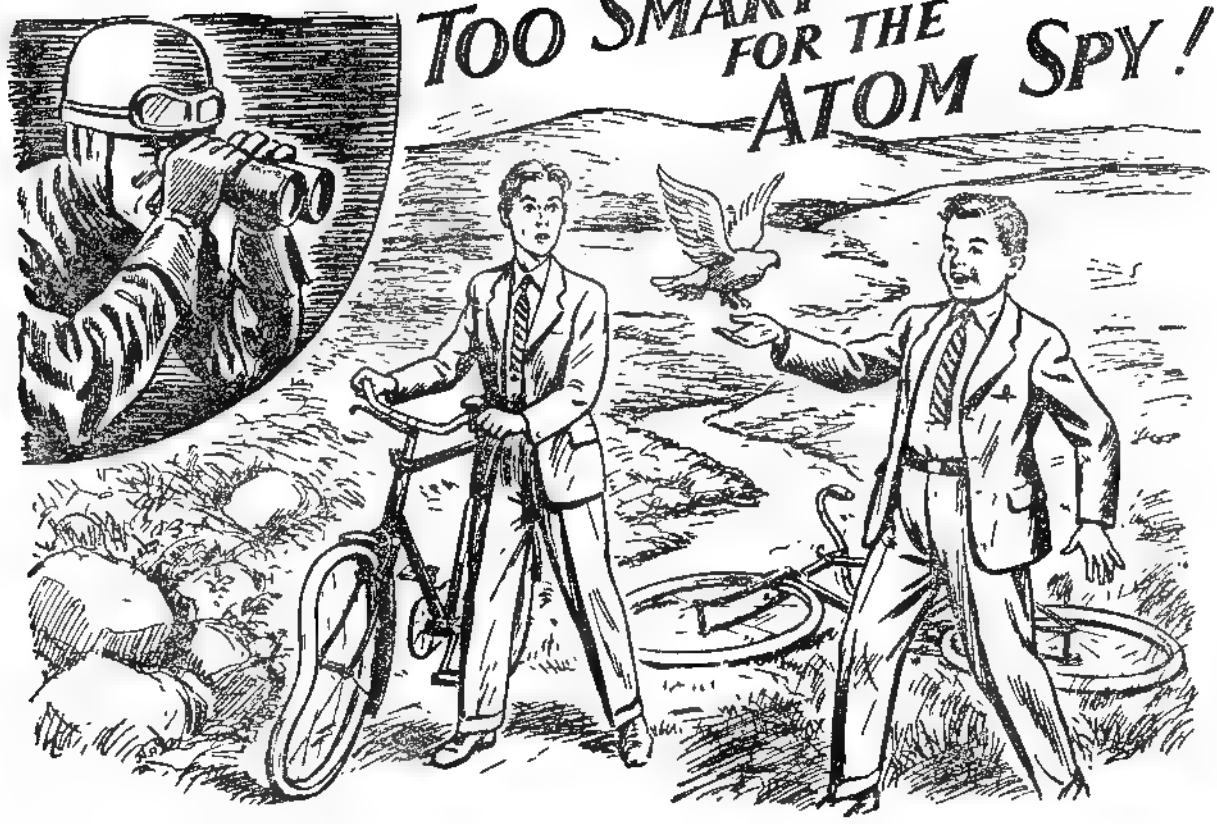
DR STANTON'S ENQUIRY DIDN'T TAKE LONG. IN VIEW OF THE BOOT-BOY'S CONFESSION, BOSSY AND CO. WERE FORCED TO OWN UP. THEY WERE SENT AT ONCE TO THE DETENTION ROOM. MOREOVER, SANDY AND CO. WERE PERMITTED TO BRING THE DUMMY FROM THE DETENTION ROOM AND TO DRESS IT UP AGAIN. THE WHOLE SCHOOL THEN HAILED SANDY'S GUY AS THE WINNER

AMID GREAT EXCITEMENT, THE HEAD PRESENTED A HUGE BOX OF FIREWORKS TO SANDY AND CO
I TRUST THIS GIFT WILL MAKE UP FOR WHAT YOU HAVE SUFFERED
YOU BET, SIR!
GOOD OLD SANDY!

WHILE THE FIREWORK DISPLAY WAS REALLY GETTING UNDER WAY, BOSSY'S TWO PALS HAD QUITE A LOT TO SAY TO HIM
YOU AND YOUR SCHEMES BOSSY! IF YOU HADN'T TRIED TO INTERFERE WITH SANDY DEAN, WE'D HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE FUN WITH THE REST
YOU'RE AN ABSOLUTE WASHOUT, BOSSY! WE CAN'T SEE A SINGLE SPARK FROM THIS ROOM!

BUT SANDY, JACK AND OWL - AND THE REST OF THE SCHOOL - VOTED IT THE BEST FIFTH OF NOVEMBER ON RECORD!
MARVELLOUS FIREWORKS THESE, AREN'T THEY, CHAPS?
A WIZARD LOT!
AND THANKS FOR SHARING 'EM OUT, SANDY!

TOO SMART FOR THE ATOM SPY!



By Nigel Dawn

CHUBBY GETS THE BIRD

"LOOK out, you clumsy clot! You nearly had me off then!" Septimus Aubrey Montgomery Fludd, nicknamed "Skinny" by his pals, shouted indignantly to his companion. At the same time he brought under control his big, elder brother's bike, which he was riding and which had nearly collided with Chubby Danmore's two-wheeler.

Chubby Danmore scarcely heard Skinny, who was his pal. Cycling across the bumpy, narrow track across Bleasdale Moor was tricky at any time, requiring absolute concentration on the path ahead. Riding alongside Skinny called for even extra caution. Even so, Chubby was paying more attention to the sky above than to the earth beneath his bike's wheels

Suddenly, the inevitable happened. A rut in the path took control of Chubby's front wheel, turning it sharply. Before Skinny could take evasive action, his pal's wheel smacked into his bike.

Crash!

Chubby's ten stone and five pounds of weight knocked Skinny clean off the high saddle.

Thud! Skinny landed in a sprawling heap among the bushes at one side of the track.

"S-sorry, Skinny. I say, I'm frightfully sorry!" Chubby gasped, toppling off his bike. "I wasn't looking where I was going!"

"You telling me?" screeched Skinny, scrambling to his feet and ruefully surveying the partly-buckled front wheel of his brother's bike. "Look at that? What's Fred going to say when he sees it, you blithering idiot?"

"That's what he's going to say," grinned Chubby feebly. "But it was an accident I was watching that pigeon up there. Look!"

He pointed upwards. Wheeling above them in a series of unusual, jerky movements was a pigeon!

Skinny grunted wrathfully

"Oh, that! You're pigeon barmy! I say," he added suddenly, "what's wrong with the bird?"

"That's what I was asking myself when I should have been looking at the path," replied Chubby "If I'm any judge, that bird is exhausted And if it was flying through the storm we had half-an-hour ago, that explains why"

Both boys leapt to their feet, for the pigeon dropped towards them, almost like a stone It scrabbled for a foothold on Chubby Danmore's outstretched hand

"Well, I'm blowed," breathed Skinny, suitably impressed "He must have known you keep pigeons."

Chubby's plump hand went up to caress and

Chubby Made a Pal of a Pigeon—and Then the Trouble Started!

comfort the bird, which made no attempt to leave its human perch.

"It's a racing pigeon," burst out Skinny. "There's a metal band on its leg. Lost its way, I suppose!"

"Maybe," said Chubby, still soothing the exhausted bird. "But I think he's just tired out. Don't forget the gale that was blowing this morning. Any pigeon trying to fly against that would have its work cut out."

"What are you going to do with it, Chubby?"

"Take it home, of course," was the answer. "Feed it and let it rest—then let it go again. I shan't keep it with my birds, though; they'd fight it. But I can keep it in the chicken-run—you know, the empty section Dad built on last week."

"Good idea!" agreed Skinny, and then his anxiety about his brother's bike returned. "I say, d'you think we can get this wheel ship-shape?"

"Sure. Leave it to Chubby," grinned his pal. "Always bring your troubles to your Uncle Chub."

"I'll be bringing my brother to you if he spots the damage. Gosh, Chubby, I wish I had a bike of my own. Even an old one like yours would be better than none at all."

"Here, what's the idea calling my bike 'old'?" protested his plump pal. "Jolly good machine, I reckon."

"In the year 'dot'!" grinned Skinny. "It probably came out of Noah's Ark!"

He had touched on a raw spot. Chubby was very sensitive about his bike, and was blind to all its faults and old age. After all, it had cost him nine shillings and sixpence. His fat, shiny face was red as he squared up to Skinny.

"For two pins I'd bang you one on that skinny beak you call a nose!" he exclaimed. "And I would, too, but for this bird on my shoulder."

"Okay, Chubby. I was only pulling your fat leg," chuckled his pal, and then glanced up at the sky, which was darkening again. "I believe we're going to get another basinful of storm. Hadn't we better be moving?"

"You're right. It's going to pour like blazes in a minute. Here, let me get your wheel between my knees. I think I can straighten it well enough to take us home. Then I can fix it properly."

Chubby gripped the wheel and tugged hard at it. He straightened it out so well that when his pal mounted the bike and pedalled off gingerly, the front wheel only scraped against the forks occasionally. This time, however, Skinny took jolly good care not to ride two abreast.

Behind him, now riding with extreme care, came Chubby, the pigeon still settled peacefully upon his shoulder. In fact, it appeared to be sleeping.

"We shall just make it!" sang out Skinny, hearing a distant clap of thunder. "Nice weather—for ducks. Gale before breakfast and halfway through the morning, then a blooming thunderstorm. Shouldn't be surprised if we get some snow for supper."

"You never know what's in store for you in this place," declared Chubby.

He didn't realise how right he was. He did not know, for instance, that a pair of powerful field-glasses searching the heavens and the moorland wastes for the past hour had picked up the complete incident of the bicycle collision and arrival of the exhausted pigeon. And those same powerful glasses were now focused on the two pals, cycling home with the pigeon.

The torrent of angry words that sped to the lips of the man using the glasses were lost in the mighty peal of thunder that suddenly rocked the country-side. But there was no disguising the frustration and rage which showed on the dark face behind the field-glasses!

WHO IS THE MYSTERY WATCHER?

"PHEW, Skinny, that was a near thing. Another coupla minutes and we'd have been drenched."

Skinny was too breathless to reply in words—he just grunted and nodded. He and Chubby had ridden all out to keep ahead of the storm, and as Skinny's mount was several sizes too big for him, he'd had a hard time.

"Come on. Shove the bikes in the scullery," urged Chubby. "While you're doing that, I'll lock 'Beautiful' in the chicken run, an' give her some corn—"

"'Beautiful'?" sniffed Skinny. "Who's that—the pigeon? Looks quite ordinary to me."

"You've got no eye for pigeons, pal," grinned Chubby, clasping the bird to his chest and hurrying down the flagged garden path. "This one's a beauty and no mistake."

He opened the newly-built section his father had added to the chicken-run, made a comfortable box of straw for his feathered friend, threw down a handful of his father's best chicken food, and waved a grinning farewell.

"Make yourself at home, Beautiful. If you don't like the box, there's always the perch. Plenty of food and water—an' no charge. If you're good I'll let you go again to-morrow."

He locked up behind him and ran hastily for the scullery door, as it began to rain hard. Skinny was already dismantling the front wheel of his brother Fred's bike.

"I'm keeping you to your word, Chubby. You've gotta get this wheel straightened up."

Chubby did not answer him. He was staring out of the steamy window of the scullery, which gave a view of part of the garden and a section of the road. Standing in the shelter of the tree by the road gate was a man in waterproof clothing. His helmeted head and goggles proclaimed him to be a motor-cyclist.

He seemed very interested in Chubby's garden; but he started violently and pulled away out of sight as he glimpsed Chubby's face at the window.

Chubby fully expected to hear the sound of a motor-bike engine bursting into life as the stranger went on his way. But the stranger did not leave—not for a long time. When Chubby glanced out of the window half-an-hour later he was convinced the motor-cyclist was still there.

"Well, it's a free country, isn't it," said Skinny,

when his pal voiced his suspicions. "He can stand under the tree if he wants, surely!"

"But I tell you he was squinting at our garden through field-glasses, or binoculars," exclaimed Chubby. "What's the idea? He can't be short-sighted as all that, else he wouldn't be riding a motor-cycle."

"Well, you're not certain that he is riding a motor-cycle," grinned Skinny.

"If he's not a motor-cyclist, what's he wearing that get-up for?" howled Chubby.

"Suppose—supposing he's a pillion passenger, or a side-car passenger? Either would justify him wearing the togs," persisted Skinny. "But why don't you blooming well go and ask him?"

Chubby grabbed at his father's garden raincoat from the peg of the door.

"And so I jolly well will, clever dick!" he gritted.

Chubby was looking crest-fallen, however, when he came back a few moments later. Skinny, having heard the 'thrrump' of a motor-cycle engine springing into life, knew the reason

"I know, I know," he remarked sympathetically. "The lighter pushed off before you could ask him anything."

"You're right, he did. The moment he saw me hopping down the path, he bolted for his bike and was away before I could even get a glimpse of him," growled Chubby "And I hadn't a chance to spot his number plate, either. Jolly queer, though, don't you think?"

Skinny scratched his head and agreed.

"Still the world's full of queer people," he added diplomatically. "Hallo," he exclaimed, as the rain ceased as suddenly as it had begun, "the storm's over I think I'll buzz off home and shove this bike away before my brother Fred gets back from work. Thanks a lot for your help. See you in the morning By the way, don't forget to get a bit of catapult practice in between now and then"

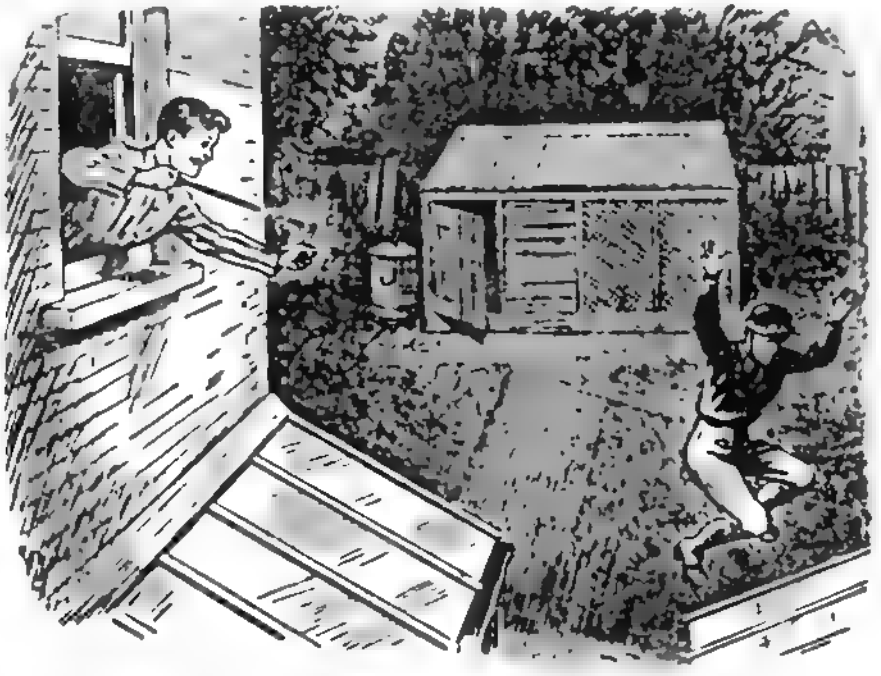
"Of course. I'd almost forgotten we've a catapult match on to-morrow with Barstow's gang from Maidstock Okay, I'll get some practice before I go to bed. So long, Skinny."

He watched his pal mount the big bike, loyally hoped Skinny would get it home again undamaged, and straightway forgot about Skinny, the bike, and even the exhausted pigeon. Catapult practice was the foremost subject in his mind.

He was a good marksman, strong in the wrist and level of eye. Chubby's practice board consisted of the wooden lid of the kitchen copper—when his mother wasn't looking—whitened all over with chalk or flour. Any missile striking the improvised target would be certain to leave a tell-tale mark. By this means Chubby was able to make a score card and improve upon it with his daily practice.

At twenty-five paces, about the distance from the scullery door to the end of the chicken run, he could hit the bullseye -the centre of the copper lid—nine times out of ten. He hadn't a doubt that he and Skinny would "walk away" with the following day's match against the Barstow gang.

But a lot was destined to happen before the time for that catapult match came round—and a catapult was going to play a very big part in it.



Chubby let fly with his catapult, drawing a yell of pain and surprise from the mystery motor-cyclist. That would teach him not to come snooping around Chubby's garden in the middle of the night!

THE CATAPULT CRACKSHOT!

BLEASDALE MOOR lay still and silent under the stars

After the storms of the day the air was clammy and close. As a result nearly every window in the little cottage inhabited by the Danmore family was open and free to the night air. Even so, Chubby found it extremely difficult to get to sleep. He'd counted sheep until he was sick of sheep, he'd tried saying his alphabet backwards until now he could scarcely say it correctly, and he had heard the old grandfather clock in the passage downstairs strike every hour.

It was just after two o'clock in the morning when Chubby's hopeful doze into slumber was rudely shattered. He sat bolt upright, rubbing his eyes. He hadn't been dreaming, surely? Had he really heard the sound of a motor-bike? Listening now, no unusual sounds came to his ears. Certainly nothing resembling the sound of a motor-bike engine running.

And yet –

He crept from the bed and peered out of the wide open window There wasn't much to see; just the

shadowy length of the pretty garden, with the pigeon loft and the chicken run on the one side and father's cucumber frames on the other.

"Phew!" A low whistle escaped Chubby and he drew back. Something was different down there in the garden. A tall figure had come in by the garden gate, and was stealthily moving towards the pigeon loft. To Chubby's astonishment the intruder unwound from the staple the cord controlling the trap in the pigeon loft, pulled hard on it, thus opening the hinged door wide.

"What's the big idea, trying to let my birds loose? Not that they'll leave the loft at this time of night!" Chubby gasped. He stood perfectly still, watching the mysterious intruder's next move.

After staring up at the open loft for a full three minutes, the night prowler growled in disgust and then, flashing on a pocket torch swept the small beam of light along the length and breadth of the chicken run.

The light disturbed the hens, set the one cockerel crowing, and also sent Chubby into action. This was too much. No night prowler had the authority to come upsetting his dad's birds. Chubby seized his catapult and a handful of slugs—heavy ones.

Twang! Twing! Twang! In rapid succession Chubby sent three slugs hurtling at the unwelcome stranger. The man jumped a foot in the air as they hit him and yelled in pain and surprise. Twang! Twong! Twing! Three more went after him with the precision of machine-gun bullets!

"Hi, you!" bawled Chubby. "What's your game?"

If he expected the night prowler to stop and explain, Chubby was doomed to disappointment. Far from lingering, the man was in such haste to make his departure that he tripped and measured his length on one of Chubby's father's cucumber frames!

Crash! The yell that went with the sound of breaking glass woke up the entire Danmore family, which included Chubby's mother, father, and brother Fred.

Seconds later, came the ear-shattering roar of a powerful engine throbbing into action. It swelled to a crescendo then, as its rider—the mysterious intruder—let in the clutch and moved away, began to fade into a hum. Finally it was lost in the blanketing folds of night and distance.

"Whatever is happening, son?" Mr. Danmore demanded, dashing in to Chubby.

"If you'll give me a chance I'll explain," said Chubby, feeling quite important.

"And it had better be a right explanation, son," growled Mr. Danmore, "I don't like my night's rest messed up—to say nothing of what looks uncommonly like one of my best cucumber frames all smashed up out there."

Quickly Chubby explained what had happened.

When the Danmore family at last retired to bed again, Chubby had formed a very concrete idea about the night's occurrence. His father and the rest had reckoned that they had been visited by a chicken thief. Not so, Chubby.

"He was no hen thief. He came after that pigeon Skinny and I found. He was the chap with the binoculars, I'll bet," Chubby muttered.

As a result of that conclusion, he was able to write in his diary that this was the "shortest night's rest he had ever had." Long before dawn he was up and dressed.

He hurried down to the chicken-run, making certain that the prize homing pigeon was still there. It was, and it looked sprightly and very much alive after its rest.

"H'm! Beautiful wants to be off—anyone can see that," remarked Chubby regretfully. "Ah, well. It isn't mine. Suppose I'd better let it go and." He bent down, almost to knee level and gazed hard at one leg of the homing pigeon.

There was a light metal band encircling the slender leg. And something else too—very cunningly attached and difficult to see at first glance.

"A cylinder!" breathed Chubby, his cheeks red with excitement. "That's what. So it's a carrier pigeon! Phew!"

Very gingerly he opened the trap and groped for the pigeon. He was soon unhitching the tiny, light-alloy cylinder from the metal ring.

Some of his caution left him in that moment. Excitably he started to examine his find. His hold on the pigeon relaxed. In a flash the pigeon was away and wheeling aloft.

"Oh, crumbs!" Chubby's face was a picture of dismay, as he gazed skywards. Mockingly, it seemed, the pigeon circled overhead twice, and then darted off at full stretch, straight as an arrow from a bow

"He's gone!"

Breathlessly, Chubby ran up the hill by the side of the cottage. From there he had a good view of the surrounding countryside for a distance of three miles. Not until the pigeon was just a speck in the distance did he return to the cottage.

"Beautiful's gone for ever," he muttered gloomily "That bird went non-stop as far as Collinton Copse. I shall never see it again."

But Chubby was wrong—he was going to meet the pigeon again, and also meet up with some amazing surprises!

THE SPY-HUNTER!

POLICE-SERGEANT GEORGE FARMER was very much on his toes. He felt he had to be when being interviewed by a member of the mysterious MI5 spy-hunting organisation, which was mainly concerned with safeguarding the nation's secrets

"Thank you, Sergeant, for being so helpful," his visitor was saying. "There's just one other person I want to check with you. This Doctor Lucas—oh, I know that is the name he took when he became naturalised, five years ago. Does he crop up at all, in any way, in your daily life down here? Just speak freely. Tell me all you know about him."

The Sergeant grinned.

"Oh, him, sir? He's one of the best! Always gives a handsome donation to the Police Charity, the Sports' Fund and the Benevolent—"

"Quite, quite—"

"A harmless old fogey, really. Beggin' your pardon, he's not so old—about forty-five, I should say. He's a full time naturalist. Lives in a timber cottage in a clearing in Collinton Copse. Keeps an aviary, and has got pretty well every type of bird you've heard of in this country, and also some rare foreign birds. We've all been over the place. About three quarters of an acre, he's got. Pop in when you like—always welcome. Of course, sometimes he's away lecturing at colleges. 'Believe he's pretty good at the job from all accounts, sir. For the rest he gives no trouble to anyone, least of all the police. If all our citizens were as law abiding as Dr. Lucas—"

He stopped as he became aware that someone had entered the little country police station of Bleasdale; and scowled when he recognised Chubby Danmore and Skinny.

"Not just now, you boys," he snapped. "I'm busy. Come back later, and tell me what's bothering you."

The two boys made no move to leave.

"It's important, Sergeant," breathed Chubby. "Look what I've got!" He triumphantly held up the little metal cylinder. "A little bird gave it to me."

To Chubby's astonishment the tall, well-dressed stranger, seated with the Sergeant, grabbed the cylinder and began to examine it.

"There's a piece of peculiar paper rolled up inside with funny markings on it," added Chubby. "We can't make head nor tail of what it's meant to be."

Neither could Sergeant Farmer; but the MI5 man was in no doubt as to what that little cylinder contained. It was a piece of microfilm; and on it was a highly-secret chemical formula.

"Good heavens! Where did you get this, boy? Quickly! It is of national importance!"

The man's eagerness fired Chubby's blood and set Skinny a-tingling with excitement. Between them, the boys told their story, Chubby ending with an account of what had happened in his garden during the night.

"Motor bike—smashed cucumber frame—Collinton Copse." The MI5 man spoke his thoughts aloud.

"Oh, and I forgot to tell you, sir, that when the burglar chap crashed into the cucumber frame he must have cut himself," added Chubby, "for there were spots of blood all over the place."

The spy-hunter from MI5 was already on his feet and putting on his bowler.

"Quickly, Sergeant. My car is outside. Come on—and bring your handcuffs!"

"Handcuffs? Ye-es, sir—Oh, certainly, sir!"

The very bewildered and flustered Police-Sergeant followed his distinguished visitor outside. In his agitation he did not realise that the two boys had also jumped into the car, until the engine had started up.

"Hi, you two! Gerroutofhere!" he roared.

"Oh, let them stay!" snapped the MI5 man. "I may need the fat one—for identification purposes."

"Oh!" The Sergeant was taken aback. "And where, sir, are we going, may I ask?"

"We are going to call on your old friend, Dr. Lucas the harmless old fogey, I think you called him. You know, the naturalist!"

The fast car ate up the miles to Collinton Copse, but had to crawl slowly along the uneven track to the cottage in the clearing.

"Yes, sir, this is the pigeon we found on the moors yesterday!" Chubby cried excitedly to the bowler-hatted MI5 man. By recognising that bird, Chubby had unmasked an atom spy!

Dr. Lucas, a tall man, clad in a loose, shabby sports jacket and corduroy trousers, came out to meet his visitors. He was wearing gloves. He smiled affably at Sergeant Farmer.

"Good morning to you, Sergeant. I heard your car! Ah, I recognise our two young friends as local boys, but I haven't the pleasure of knowing"

The MI5 man broke in.

"Dr. Lucas, I won't waste time in formalities. I am here on business." He showed his card. "You will please carry out my instructions."

"Why, of course," was the reply, and Chubby was sure the man's face paled. "At your service."

"You keep birds here, I know. Do you keep any pigeons?" enquired the spy-hunter.

"Why, of course," was the easy reply. "There is hardly an English bird you care to mention that I don't keep here. I have dozens of foreign birds, as well."

"We'll see the pigeons first!" snapped the MI5 man.

Dr. Lucas led the party to a series of pigeon lofts, and was about to release the traps when the MI5 man restrained him.

"Oh, no! I want to see your collection at close quarters!" He beckoned to Chubby and Skinny. "Each of you get a ladder. Now I want you to take a look at these birds and see if you recognise the one you told me about."

"Okay, sir!" whooped the two pals. Soon both were climbing up the ladders which were used for cleaning out the lofts, while the MI5 man, the Sergeant, and Dr. Lucas stood watching.

Four of the lofts were inspected without result. But squinting into the fifth, Chubby let out a whoop of excitement. Then he reached in and took out a pigeon.

"Yes, sir—this is the pigeon we found on the moors yesterday!" he cried.

"Well, Dr. Lucas," said the MI5 man quietly, "haven't you anything to say?"

The doctor smiled easily and spread his gloved hands.

"The bird the boys describe—the one with the white collar round its neck, with the brown mark in the centre of it, flew into this clearing less than an hour ago. I've never seen it before, but any bird has sanctuary with me. I shall release it in due course and doubtless it will return to its owner."

The MI5 man was not impressed.

"I have not the slightest doubt, Dr. Lucas, that it has already returned to its owner. Quick, Sergeant seize him! Oh, good for you," he added as Sergeant Farmer, very much on his toes, obeyed the instruction swiftly, taking the doctor by surprise. "Now, off with these gloves."

With a quick movement the MI5 man drew off the gloves Dr. Lucas was wearing. They revealed a pair of hands covered with tell-tale plaster bandages freshly bloodstained.

"Here, I think," smiled the MI5 man with a genial nod at Chubby, "is your night prowler—the man who smashed your father's cucumber frame. Do you happen to have a motor-bike, Doctor? Ah, I can see you have. Well, it's quite likely we shall find a few bloodstains on the handlebar controls, eh?"

Doctor Lucas stared at the MI5 man for a moment, and then, before even the secret service man realised what was happening, the naturalist pushed Chubby into the spy-hunter, sending him off his balance.

The spy spun round on his heels and raced for his motor-cycle standing nearby. He gave a swift downward prod at the kick-start and the machine roared into life. Lucas grimly hanging on to the handlebars, sent the machine zooming out of the gate and heading for the moors.

The MI5 man, recovered now from his surprise, gave a hurried yelled order to his three companions and sped for the police car.

Chubby and Skinny barely had time to tumble into the car's rear seats and slam the doors before the MI5 man sent the car rocketting forward in pursuit of the escaping spy.

At last, with Lucas some distance ahead on his hurtling motor-bike, the car gave one hefty bump and reached the better road that led over the moors.

The car's engine responded immediately to the MI5 man's touch on the accelerator. The car leaped forward so suddenly that Chubby and Skinny, wide-eyed with amazement and excitement, were thrust into the cushions of the rear seat.

Round one corner almost on two wheels, the police car zoomed. Breathlessly the pals watched the gap between the escaping spy and the police car narrow.

A few moments later, disaster overtook the fleeing spy. As he banked his machine over to take a bend, he apparently misjudged the sharpness of that bend.

The four in the pursuing car gasped as they saw the spy hurtling for a wall on the other side of the bend. Somehow the crooked naturalist managed to "lay the bike down" and roll away from the plunging machine.

The police car pulled up with a screech of brakes, and the secret service man was out into the road almost before the car had skidded to a halt.

Dr. Lucas was picking himself up as the detective sprinted over. The spy turned to face him with a wry look on his face.

"O.K.," Lucas snapped, "you win! I know when I'm beaten. You're right, I did break into that boy's garden last night and tried to get back my pigeon."

"I knew that; I've had my eye on you for a long time," the spy-hunter said grimly. "Secrets were disappearing from one of our Atom Plants. Oh, we have known for some time who the thief was, but we purposely let him go on stealing in order to track down the man he sent the secrets to. The homing pigeon was a good means of transport. I saw you had a flock of them—so has your friend at his end of the chain. Birds of a feather, eh?"

The MI5 man turned to Sergeant Farmer.

"That will be all, Sergeant. Guard him well—I shall take him to London where he will be properly charged. Oh, and one other thing, Doctor Lucas," added the MI5 man.

"For the past six months your country has been receiving, via you and your accomplice in the Atom Plant, a phoney set of atom secrets. They wouldn't even tell you how to split a hair, let alone an atom."

Chubby suddenly gave a loud yawn. "Gosh, I could do with some sleep," he gasped.

"And what else could you do with, son?" asked the MI5 man "Didn't you keep referring to your 'old' bike when you told me what happened yesterday. What do you say to a new one as a reward for helping track down this spy?"

"Make it two bikes, sir, and I'll say yes, please!" replied Chubby cheekily.

"And two it shall be—one for you and one for your pal."

"Eureka!" yelled Chubby. "I say, sir, one other thing—"

He broke off shyly. Skinny came to his rescue.

"I know what he wants, sir," Skinny burst out. "He wants that pigeon! You know, the one he calls 'Beautiful'."

The spy-hunter chuckled.

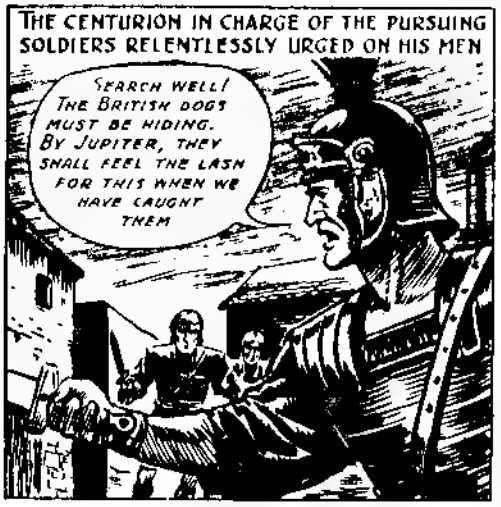
"Chubby can have the bird as well, now that we've got our bird," he winked. "Let's get going, or we shall be too late to order those bikes. To-day's Wednesday—early closing day!"

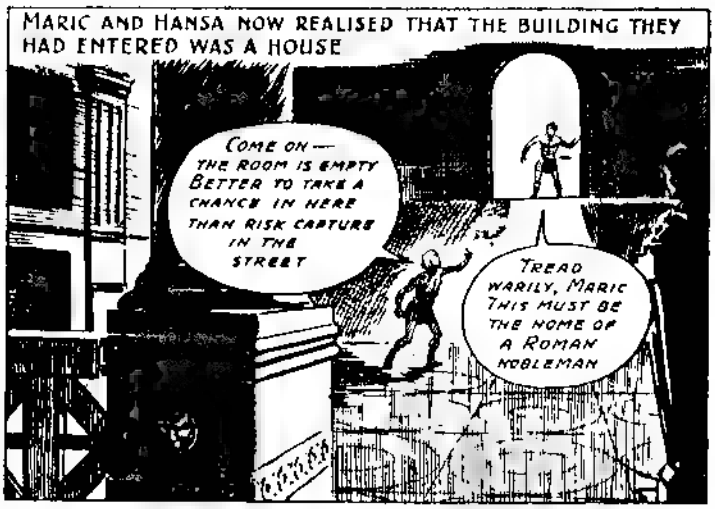
The Slaves who Saved the Emperor

By GEORGE FORREST

ALONG A NARROW STREET IN ANCIENT ROME RAN TWO YOUNG BRITONS. THEIR NAMES WERE MARIC AND HANSA. BOTH WERE SLAVES — AND EVER SINCE THEIR CAPTURE BY THE ROMANS THEY HAD LONGED TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY. AT LAST CAME THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO ESCAPE FROM THE SHIP ON WHICH THEY WERE SERVING AS GALLEY-SLAVES. TOGETHER THEY HAD CAUTIOUSLY MADE THEIR WAY FROM THE QUAY AT WHICH THEIR SHIP WAS MOORED. BUT THEY WERE SEEN BY ROMAN SOLDIERS, WHO AT ONCE GAVE CHASE

AS SOLDIERS APPEARED AT BOTH ENDS OF THE STREET, THE TWO BRITONS DECIDED TO HIDE IN A NEARBY BUILDING
QUICK, HANSA! IF WE TAKE COVER IN HERE, WE MAY YET OUTWIT THEM
PULL, MARIC! I WOULD RATHER DIE THAN FALL INTO ROMAN HANDS AGAIN


THE CENTURION IN CHARGE OF THE PURSUING SOLDIERS RELENTLESSLY URGED ON HIS MEN
SEARCH WELL! THE BRITISH DOGS MUST BE HIDING. BY JUPITER, THEY SHALL FEEL THE LASH FOR THIS WHEN WE HAVE CAUGHT THEM


MARIC AND HANSA NOW REALISED THAT THE BUILDING THEY HAD ENTERED WAS A HOUSE
COME ON — THE ROOM IS EMPTY BETTER TO TAKE A CHANCE IN HERE THAN RISK CAPTURE IN THE STREET
TREAD WARILY, MARIC THIS MUST BE THE HOME OF A ROMAN NOBLEMAN

STEALTHILY THE TWO BRITONS ADVANCED — TILL THE SOUND OF VOICES IN THE NEXT ROOM MADE THEM STOP
WE ARE READY, THEN, TO RISE AGAINST THE EMPEROR AND SLAY HIM?
WE ARE INDEED, DURBIO. UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP, WE WILL ORGANISE A REVOLT AND SEIZE POWER FOR OURSELVES

IT IS WELL, MY FRIENDS. TO ENSURE YOUR LOYALTY TO ME, I HAVE WRITTEN YOUR NAMES — AND THE PARTS YOU ARE TO PLAY IN THIS REVOLT — ON A PARCHMENT. THIS I HAVE HIDDEN AT THE FOOT OF THE STATUE OF WRESTLERS IN THE GROUNDS OF MY PALACE. SHOULD ANY OF YOU TURN TRAITOR TO ME, AND REVEAL MY PLANS TO THE EMPEROR, THAT PARCHMENT WILL BE HANDED TO HIM IT WILL PROVE THAT WE ARE ALL IN THIS PLOT TOGETHER!

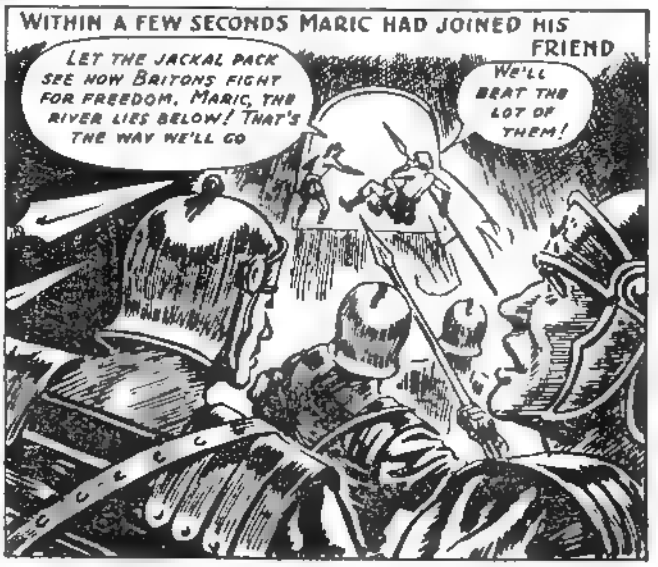
AS THE TWO BRITONS OVERHEARD THE PLOT TO KILL THE EMPEROR, A DARING IDEA ENTERED MARIC'S MIND. EAGERLY HE TURNED TO HIS FRIEND
HANSA! THIS SHOWS ME THE WAY TO EARN OUR FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY! IF WE CAN OBTAIN THAT PARCHMENT AND GIVE IT TO THE EMPEROR, HE WILL BE ABLE TO PREVENT THE REVOLT. HIS LIFE WILL BE SAVED — AND I'M CERTAIN HE WOULD REWARD US BY SETTING US FREE!
BY THE GODS, IT'S A WONDERFUL SCHEME, MARIC! THE PARCHMENT MAY BE WELL GUARDED — BUT LET US HAVE NO FEAR

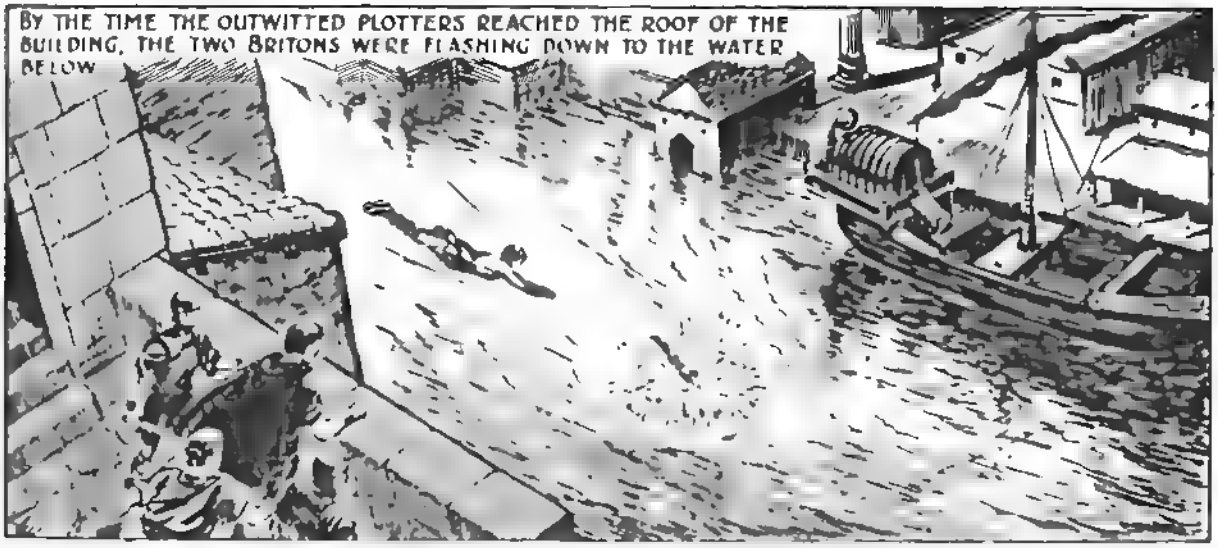
WILDLY EXCITED, THE TWO BRITONS TURNED TO STEAL AWAY. THROUGH SHEER BAD LUCK, HOWEVER, HANSA'S SHOULDER CAUGHT THE HANDLE OF A GREAT VASE AND —
HANSA! IF THE PLOTTERS HEARD THAT CRASH —

THE CRASH WAS HEARD!
SPIES, BY THUNDER! DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY! ROUSE THE GUARDS!

AS THE ALARM WAS RAISED, ARMED MEN CAME RUSHING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS. BUT MARIC AND HANSA WEREN'T THE SORT TO SURRENDER
THERE THEY ARE! STOP THEM!
GET THROUGH THE WINDOW, HANSA! I'LL SOON BE WITH YOU
OH!

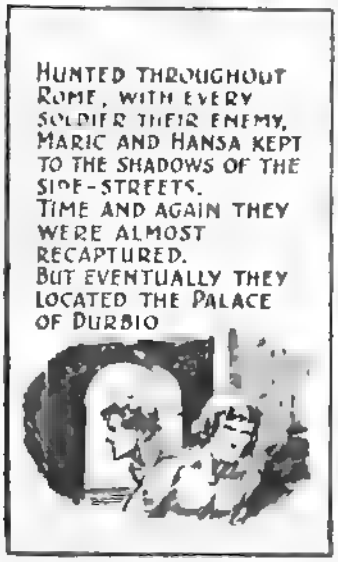
GRIMLY MARIC GRAPPLED WITH ONE OF THE PURSUERS AND TORE HIS LANCE FROM HIM
I NEED THIS, ROMAN. METHINKS I CAN SHOW YOUR MASTERS A BETTER USE FOR IT!

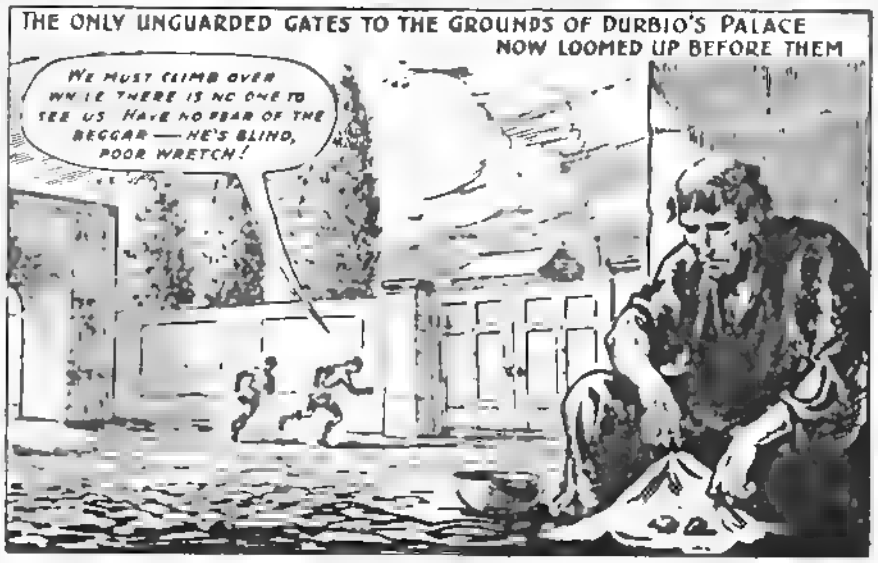

WITHIN A FEW SECONDS MARIC HAD JOINED HIS FRIEND
LET THE JACKAL PACK SEE HOW BRITONS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM, MARIC, THE RIVER LIES BELOW! THAT'S THE WAY WE'LL GO
WE'LL BEAT THE LOT OF THEM!


BY THE TIME THE OUTWITTED PLOTTERS REACHED THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING, THE TWO BRITONS WERE FLASHING DOWN TO THE WATER BELOW

BOTH STRONG SWIMMERS, MARIC AND HANSA SOON MADE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE. THEY HAD STARTED THEIR AMAZING QUEST
NOW TO FIND THE PALACE OF DURBIO. THOUGH WE MAY DIE IN DEATH, WE MUST WREST THAT PARCHMENT FROM WHERE IT IS HIDDEN. BETTER TO DIE IN THE ATTEMPT THAN REMAIN HUNTED AS SLAVES

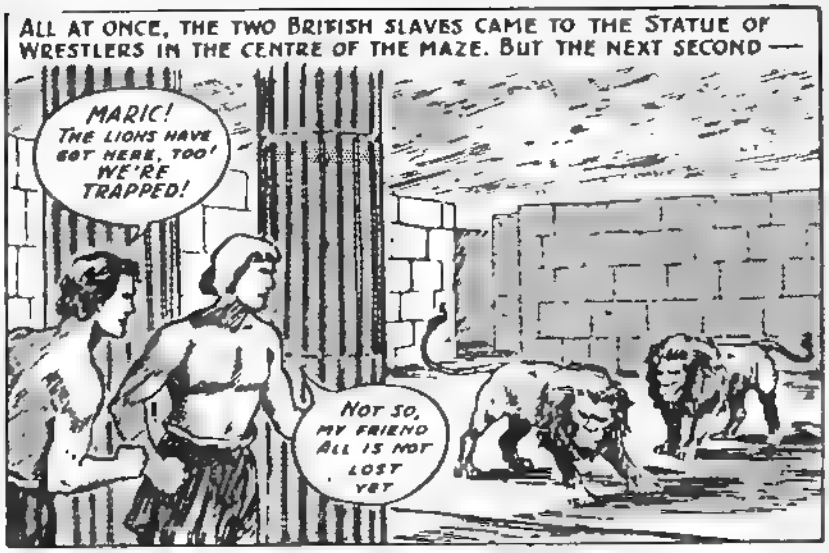
FEARING THAT THEIR SCHEME HAD BEEN OVERHEARD BY MARIC AND HANSA, DURBIO'S FELLOW-PLOTTERS NERVOUSLY GATHERED AROUND HIM. BUT HE SMILED WITH CONFIDENCE
CALM YOUR FEARS, COMRADES. THE PARCHMENT IS QUITE SAFE. EVEN IF THOSE TWO SLAVES SUCCEED IN GETTING TO THE PLACE WHERE IT IS HIDDEN, THEY WILL NEVER GET AWAY AGAIN. COME WITH ME. I PROMISE YOU SOME SPORT SHOULD THE BRITONS ENTER MY GROUNDS!

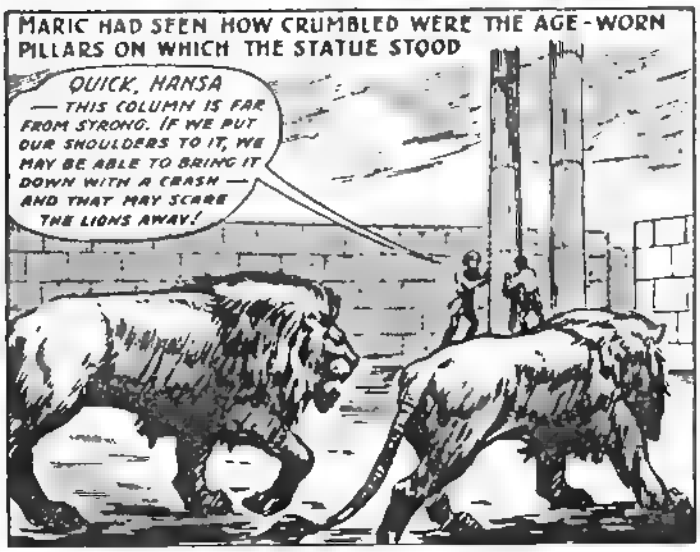

HUNTED THROUGHOUT ROME, WITH EVERY SOLDIER THEIR ENEMY, MARIC AND HANSA KEPT TO THE SHADOWS OF THE SIDE-STREETS. TIME AND AGAIN THEY WERE ALMOST RECAPTURED. BUT EVENTUALLY THEY LOCATED THE PALACE OF DURBIO


THE ONLY UNGUARDED GATES TO THE GROUNDS OF DURBIO'S PALACE NOW LOOMED UP BEFORE THEM
WE MUST CLIMB OVER WHILE THERE IS NO ONE TO SEE US. HAVE NO FEAR OF THE BEGGAR — HE'S BLIND, POOR WRETCH!

THE GATES PROVED NO OBSTACLE TO HANSA AND MARIC
IT'S STILL ALL CLEAR. LUCK IS WITH US
NOTHING CAN STOP US NOW, HANSA
THEIR HEARTS POUNDING, THE TWO BRITONS SLOWLY MOVED THROUGH THE GROUNDS
SEE — OVER YONDER WALL IS THE STATUE OF WRESTLERS! THE PROOF AGAINST THE PLOTTERS LIES HIDDEN AT ITS FOOT
THE PARCHMENT WILL HAVE TO BE WELL HIDDEN TO ESCAPE OUR EYES, MARIC! HE'LL FIND IT EVEN IF WE HAVE TO TEAR THE STATUE APART
LITTLE DID THE BRITONS KNOW THAT DURBIO AND HIS PLOTTERS WERE WATCHING FROM THE TOP OF ONE OF THE PALACE TOWERS
I CAN SEE THE TWO BRITONS, DURBIO!
HA, YES. THE POOR FOOLS ARE NOW ENTERING THE MAZE NOTHING COULD SUIT ME BETTER. I HAD IT SPECIALLY BUILT TO PRO- OF ME W TH SOME SPORT WATCH, MY FRIENDS, AND YOU WILL ENJOY A MERRY LITTLE GAME!
DURBIO BELLOWED AN ORDER TO HIS GUARDS
RE-LEASE THE LIONS INTO THE MAZE!
THE STATUE OF WRESTLERS HAD BEEN ERECTED IN THE VERY HEART OF THE MAZE. MARIC AND HANSA HURRIED ROUND AND ROUND BETWEEN THE WALLS, TRYING FIRST ONE WAY AND THEN ANOTHER
WE'RE LOST, MARIC. AND LOOK— WE'RE NOT THE FIRST WHO COULDN'T FIND A WAY OUT
HAVE COURAGE! I FEEL THE GODS ARE WITH US. NOT ONLY WILL WE REACH THE STATUE AND OBTAIN THE PARCHMENT, BUT WE WILL TAKE IT TO THE EMPEROR HIMSELF
AT THAT MOMENT THERE CAME MENACING ROARS FROM ANOTHER PART OF THE MAZE
LIONS, MARIC! THE BEASTS ARE IN THE MAZE WITH US AND ARE SCENTING US OUT!
BY JUPITER! SO THIS IS WHY DURBIO HID THE PARCHMENT HERE! HE USES THE KINGS OF THE JUNGLE AS HIS WATCH-DOGS!

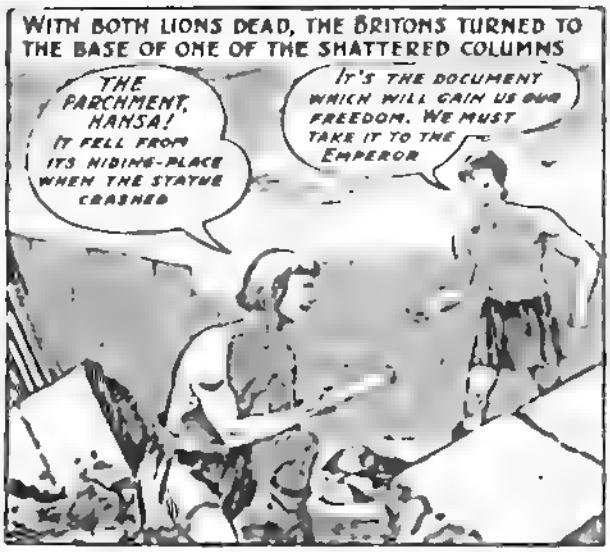
LOST IN THE MAZE, THE TWO YOUNG BRITONS WERE IN DEADLY PERIL.
AT ANY MOMENT THEY MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES FACE TO FACE WITH THE LIONS!
TO REMAIN STILL WOULD BE FATAL.
SO, WATCHED BY DURBIO AND HIS GLOATING BAND OF PLOTTERS, MARIC AND HANSA CAUTIOUSLY MADE THEIR WAY ALONG THE WALL-LINED PATHS

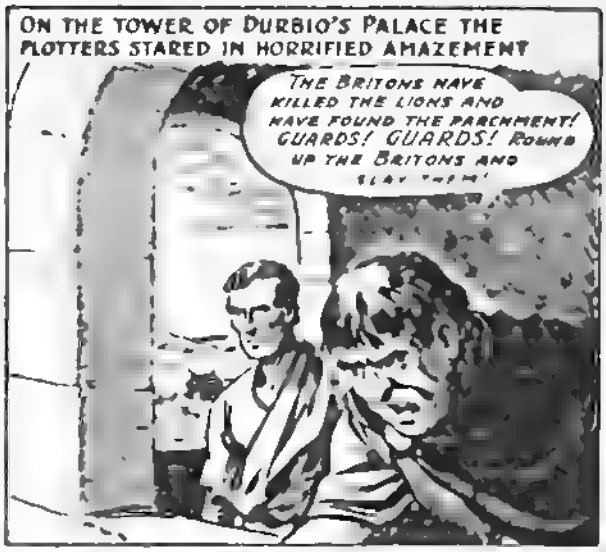

ALL AT ONCE, THE TWO BRITISH SLAVES CAME TO THE STATUE OF WRESTLERS IN THE CENTRE OF THE MAZE. BUT THE NEXT SECOND —
MARIC! THE LIONS HAVE GOT HERE, TOO! WE'RE TRAPPED!
NOT SO, MY FRIEND ALL IS NOT LOST YET


MARIC HAD SEEN HOW CRUMBLED WERE THE AGE-WORN PILLARS ON WHICH THE STATUE STOOD
QUICK, HANSA — THIS COLUMN IS FAR FROM STRONG. IF WE PUT OUR SHOULDERS TO IT, WE MAY BE ABLE TO BRING IT DOWN WITH A CRASH — AND THAT MAY SCARE THE LIONS AWAY!

MEANWHILE, THE LIONS CAME NEARER AND NEARER. ONE WAS JUST LAUNCHING ITSELF THROUGH THE AIR AT MARIC AND HANSA WHEN —
BACK! BACK! THE WHOLE THING'S FALLING!

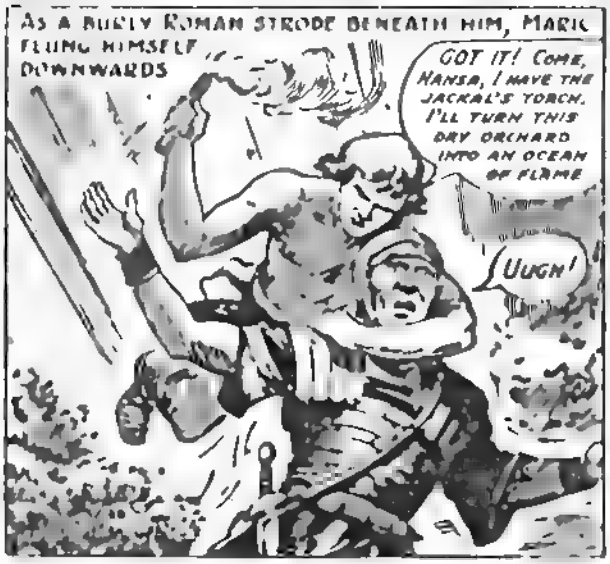
THE LEADING LION HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE TUMBLING MASONRY. MARIC DEALT WITH THE OTHER IN A FLASH
NOTHING SHALL STOP US NOW. NOTHING, MARIC!

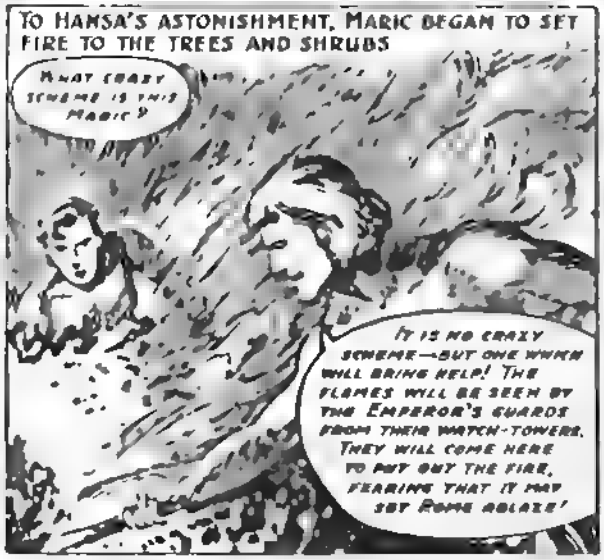

WITH BOTH LIONS DEAD, THE BRITONS TURNED TO THE BASE OF ONE OF THE SHATTERED COLUMNS
THE PARCHMENT, HANSA! IT FELL FROM ITS HIDING-PLACE WHEN THE STATUE CRASHED
IT'S THE DOCUMENT WHICH WILL GAIN US OUR FREEDOM. WE MUST TAKE IT TO THE EMPEROR


ON THE TOWER OF DURBIO'S PALACE THE PLOTTERS STARED IN HORRIFIED AMAZEMENT
THE BRITONS HAVE KILLED THE LIONS AND HAVE FOUND THE PARCHMENT! GUARDS! GUARDS! ROUND UP THE BRITONS AND SLAY THEM!

TO THEIR DELIGHT, MARIC AND HANSA QUICKLY FOUND THEIR WAY OUT OF THE MAZE AND INTO AN ORCHARD. BUT —
THE WHOLE PLACE SWARMS WITH GUARDS!
WE'LL BEAT THEM SOMEHOW. I DON'T MEAN US TO DIE NOW WE'VE GOT THE PARCHMENT THAT WILL EARN US OUR FREEDOM

THEY MAY NOT THINK TO LOOK FOR US UP HERE — AND MY NEXT PLAN WILL BE TO GET ONE OF THEIR TORCHES!
A TORCH? WHATEVER CAN MARIC HAVE IN MIND?

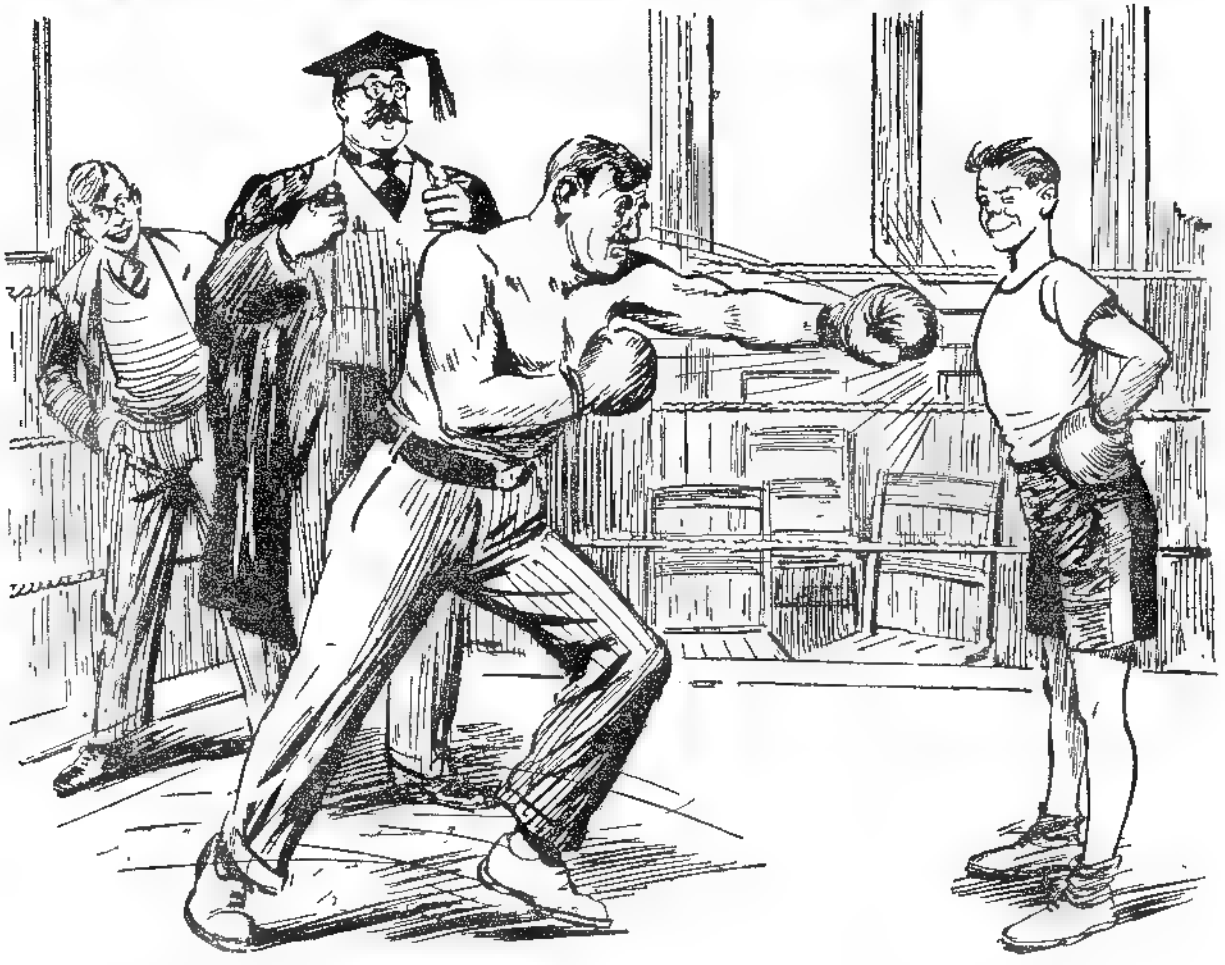

AS A BURLY ROMAN STRODE BENEATH HIM, MARIC FLUNG HIMSELF DOWNWARDS
GOT IT! COME, HANSA, I HAVE THE JACKAL'S TORCH. I'LL TURN THIS DRY ORCHARD INTO AN OCEAN OF FLAME
UUGH!


TO HANSA'S ASTONISHMENT, MARIC BEGAN TO SET FIRE TO THE TREES AND SHRUBS
WHAT CRAZY SCHEME IS THIS MARIC?
IT IS NO CRAZY SCHEME—BUT ONE WHICH WILL BRING HELP! THE FLAMES WILL BE SEEN BY THE EMPEROR'S GUARDS FROM THEIR WATCH-TOWERS. THEY WILL COME HERE TO PUT OUT THE FIRE, FEARING THAT IT MAY SET ROME ABLAZE!

FANNED BY THE BREEZE, THE ROARING INFERNO SWEPT TOWARDS THE PALACE, WHERE DURBIO RAGED AT HIS BAFFLED SOLDIERS
GO AND CATCH THE SPIES, YOU FOOLS! SLAY THEM — AND BRING TO ME THE PARCHMENT WHICH THEY CARRY!
WE CANNOT, O DURBIO THE FLAMES BAR OUR WAY
MEANWHILE, FROM A WATCH-TOWER OF ROME, A STARTLED OFFICER SIGHTED THE BLAZE AND GAVE THE ALARM
FIRE! FIRE! ASSEMBLE ALL MEN AND MAKE FOR THE PALACE OF DURBIO. ROME WILL BE THREATENED IF THE BLAZE IS NOT QUELLED!
BACK AT THE PALACE, DURBIO WILDLY URGED HIS SOLDIERS ON
THE SPIES MUST BE CAUGHT AT ALL COST! I'LL GIVE A FORTUNE TO WHICHEVER ONE OF YOU RECOVERS THE PARCHMENT!
SPURRED BY DURBIO'S RAVINGS, SOME OF HIS SOLDIERS BRAVED THE FLAMES AND GOT THROUGH. BUT MARIC AND HANSA WERE READY FOR THEM!
BACK, YOU JACKALS! HANSA, WE MUST HOLD OUT TILL THE EMPEROR'S FORCES ARRIVE
WE'LL FIGHT TO THE BITTER END TO WIN OUR FREEDOM
THE BRITONS' GALLANT RESISTANCE WAS JUST WEAKENING, WHEN THE EMPEROR'S TROOPS CAME ON THE SCENE. THEY WERE LED BY A CENTURION
STOP! WHAT MEANS THIS? IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR, PUT DOWN YOUR SWORDS
WE ARE SAVED! BY THE GODS, HANSA, THEY COME JUST IN TIME
CLASPING THE PARCHMENT, MARIC RACED TO THE CENTURION'S SIDE
NOBLE CENTURION, WE HAVE HERE PROOF OF A PLOT TO SLAY THE EMPEROR. READ FOR YOURSELF OF DURBIO'S TREACHERY!
WHAT— DURBIO A TRAITOR?

DURBIO'S MEN SCATTERED IN TERROR. BUT DURBIO HIMSELF, PLUNGING THROUGH THE FLAMES, HAD BUT ONE THOUGHT — REVENGE!
MARIC! MARIC! LOOK OUT!
NO ACCURSED SLAVE SHALL WRECK MY PLANS AND LIVE!
MARIC WHEELED IN THE NICK OF TIME. SEIZING DURBIO, HE HURLED HIM HEADLONG
THE TRAITOR HAS CONDEMNED HIMSELF BY HIS OWN WORDS — AND HE WILL PAY THE PENALTY!
THE TRAITORS WERE PUT ON TRIAL, AND ALL FOUND GUILTY. THEN IT WAS THAT THE EMPEROR ADDRESSED MARIC AND HANSA
AS A REWARD FOR THE PART YOU HAVE PLAYED IN BRINGING THE CRIMINALS TO BOOK, BRITONS, I DECLARE THAT NO LONGER ARE YOU SLAVES OF ROME. YOU ARE FREE MEN, AND AT LIBERTY TO RETURN TO YOUR OWN COUNTRY WHENEVER YOU WISH!
FREEDOM, HANSA! FREEDOM AT LAST!
A REWARD THAT HAS NO EQUAL, MARIC!

ONLY a PRESS-BUTTON CHAMP!



THE INVISIBILISER IN ACTION !

By Tom Stirling

AND what, you may ask, is an invisibiliser? Before we go any further, I'll have to tell you, otherwise you won't know what you're reading about.

Probably when you do know you'll be writing down an invisibiliser as your No. 1 Christmas present; but I'd better give this warning: there's only one made so far and that's mine.

The invisibiliser is a comparatively simple, but wonderful scientific gadget invented by my Uncle Septimus. He's a professor, and just about the most learned man you can meet.

Actually I'm not supposed to have the thing, but Uncle is a bit absent minded, and I think he's forgotten he lent it to me to try out.

What does it do? Well, it makes things invisible. Press the button, and out zip some special type of rays that cause things to vibrate faster than usual and make them invisible.

Just to give you an idea of the thing in action, suppose I'm late for school, and biking is out of the question. I stroll along to where Hoggins, one of our prefects, lives

Now, he has a motor scooter, and can get to school in no time on that. So just when he's about to start off, I sit on the pillion seat.

Of course, he notices the weight and looks behind, wondering if the brakes are binding but he can't see me. Why not? Because I have taken from my pocket the aforementioned gadget, which is roughly the size of a clip-on pocket torch, shone its rays on to myself, and become invisible.

Well, now that's all clear, picture me one fine morning cycling to school, for once in good time

I was cycling along minding my own business when suddenly, I heard a sharp, anguished yelp.

"Yowowo—"

Starring Jingo Jones—and His Invention That Made Things Invisible

Coming from a shop holding a choc. bar was my own pal, Bob Day. He was holding the choc. bar with one hand, and his ear with the other, while out of the shop after him came a tough, flat-eared, crooked-nosed lout. The odd thing was that he was hopping about on one foot.

"You young ruffian," he growled nastily at Bob "You trod on my foot!"

"It was an accident. I'm sorry," apologised Bob

"Not as sorry as you will be," retorted the tough.

With a ham like hand he knocked Bob's choc bar out of his grasp into the gutter, and then brought his fist back-handed to Bob's ear.

"Ow!" yelped Bob in surprise.

Of course, I wasn't standing for that. I don't like to see any chap bullied by some hooligan twice his size, and most certainly not when it's my own pal.

"That's enough," I said commandingly, as I got off my bike.

The tough turned to glare at me with small glinting eyes. His general appearance suggested that someone had trodden on his face when it was still warm and plastic.

"Are you talking to me?" he said, pointing a stubby finger first at me and then at himself, as though he couldn't believe his ears.

"That's right," I said, backing away as he lumbered forward. "It wouldn't pay you to hit him again."

I know it was big talk, but the tough didn't get annoyed For a minute he looked puzzled, then he grinned, and suddenly let out a hoot of laughter.

"Hey, Jem! Look who's threatening me," he called.

A cocky looking spiv type came out of the shop, weaving a bit so that he could get his shoulders through the doorway without buckling the padding.

"'Smatter?" he asked.

"I'm just warning him," I said, "not to try to hit my pal, again, or he'll have to deal with me."

"Deal with you?" echoed the spiv with an amazed expression. "Scram, sonny, before I shuffle my feet and frighten you!"

"Haw, haw!" guffawed the tough. "And just to teach this other one a lesson, I'll squash this choc. bar all over his face."

Bob had just picked up the choc. bar which, being wrapped in paper, hadn't been hurt by the fall.

With a savage twist of the wrist the tough got it away from him.

"Now's your chance, Jingo," said Bob with a wry grimace at me. "Beat him up."

Now, don't get the idea I'm a prize fighting sort of chap, I'm not. I'm just an ordinary Fourth Former, of average weight. But I had the invisibiliser as Bob, and only Bob, knew.

"Listen, son," said Jem the spiv, looking at me over his cigar. "Do you know who this gentleman is?"

He jerked his thumb at the tough

I looked at the thug intently, and made a shrewd guess. "Brother of Tarzan?" I suggested.

I backed as I spoke, for I saw the plug-ugly's eyebrows twitch. It was towards a lamp-post that I backed, and, without anyone noticing, I took out the invisibiliser

You may not see why straightaway, but I focused the rays on to the lamp-post, pressed the button, and made it invisible. Naturally, knowing it was still there I took care to get on the far side of it.

It shows a chap can't be too wary, for even as I backed away the tough came towards me with his fists raised in the usual fighting manner.

"Hitting me will be just like hitting a lamp-post, you know," I warned

He came forward, looking really nasty.

"Steady, Alf," said Jem, the spiv. "And listen, you chicken-brained half-wit," he added to me, "this gentleman you have insulted is one of the professional boxers from the Fair Ground · Alf Slaughter, the Merciless Mauler!"

That shook me. I knew by the look of him he was some kind of boxer, but I hadn't guessed it was the Merciless Mauler.

"One slam from him would stun you!" gasped Bob in alarm.

"Take it easy, Alf," warned Jem. "He's only a kid. Just clip his ear."

"Go on, clip it," I invited, pushing my head forward so that it was against the lamp-post.

Alf brought his right round in an ear-cuffing slap, which I dare say he thought was gentle.

Boingggg! went the lamp post as the tough's fist hit it.

"Oooww!' yelled Alf, flapping his hand wildly.

"Sure made my head ring," I grinned, "but it didn't hurt."

Alf glowered at me, amazed, then he lost his temper and drove his left at my face.

I can't tell you how glad I was that the invisible lamp-post was in between It took that punch for me again.

Boinggg! went the lamp-post again.

"Oooowww!" yelled Alf, tucking both fists under his armpits.

I pranced about with my fists in a sparring attitude. I kept the lamp-post between Alf and myself, and pretended to be fighting.

Alf charged like a bull straight at me, and I may as well be honest and admit that for a moment I forgot the invisible lamp-post was between us I felt icy prickles running up and down my spine.

Then Alf cannoned into the lamp-post and, quick as a flash, I darted my left in his direction to make it look as though I'd hit him.

Alf tottered back and put a hand to his forehead.

"What did he hit me with, a hammer?" he stuttered dazedly.

JINGO—WORLD-BEATER

AT that moment there was a sudden shriek of brakes, and a car pulled up near us.

"Look out, Jingo!" gasped Bob. "It's the Head!"

The old car's door was flung open, and out sprang my Headmaster.

"What is the meaning of this utterly scandalous scene?" he demanded. "Jones, I saw you strike this unfortunate man a blow on the forehead that caused him to sag at the knees."

" He started it, sir," I said, quickly. " I was trying to prove to him that bullying doesn't pay. He knocked a choc. bar out of Bob Day's hand."

The Head looked at battling Alf, who was just coming round from the stunning effect of colliding with the invisible lamp-post.

" Anyone speak to you? " he asked the Head, nastily.

" Besides Jones? No, I do not think so," said the Head with a puzzled frown. " Did you hear anyone speak to me, Jones? "

" No, sir," I said. " I think he's trying to pick a quarrel with you."

" Pick a quarrel with me? " exclaimed the Head incredulously. " Surely he cannot be so stupid to attempt to match himself against me, when you, a mere schoolboy, and rather weedy specimen at that, can deal him stunning blows? "

The Head threw out his chest, which has slipped a bit in the course of years, and braced his shoulders. His handlebar moustache bristled.

" Talking to me? " said Alf, nearly choking with anger.

" I am including you in my general remarks," nodded the Head

I saw Alf move menacingly towards the Head and summon up all his strength for a terrific right to the Head's jaw.

But there was no invisible lamp-post between the Head and Alf!

" Sir, look out! " I gasped. " He's going to hit you! "

" Hit me? " snorted the Head in scorn. " Let him hit me He will regret it Hit me if you think you can and dare," he said scoffingly to Alf.

Now, that was a silly thing to say. With a grunting noise, Alf's right swung up and caught the Head on the point of the jaw, and stretched him out full length as stiff as the lamp-post.

When I saw the Head go flat, I gave an inward groan. I couldn't help feeling sorry for him, you see.

Jem rushed forward, dropped to his knees and started rubbing the Head behind the ears, but Alf stood back, scowling.

The Head had asked for it, but he had not seriously meant Alf to fell him like an ox.

" You'll get into trouble for this," I told Alf.

" That gentleman is my Headmaster. As likely as not you'll get your boxing licence suspended."

"And if you go on like this," added Bob Day, piling on the agony for Alf, " you'll be suspended yourself—by a rope! "

" You ought never have done it," said Jem worriedly to his pal

" He only did it because he couldn't hit me," I scoffed, dodging behind the invisible lamp-post—just in case.

Alf charged me intending, I guessed, to grab me rather than hit me

But before he could do anything, the lamp-post felled him for the second time.

Thud! Alf fell full length by the side of the Head.

As he landed, another car drove up, a magnificent limousine with a five thousand pound glitter of chromium and gloss, and driven by a uniformed chauffeur.

At first glance, I thought it was the local constable in the police wagon, but a second glance told me different

Out from the car jumped a man wearing a fur lined overcoat. Between his teeth he clenched a long cigar and he stared at Alf and the Head for a moment and then came straight over to me.

" My boy! " he cried. " I will make you a world champion! "

" A w-world champion? " I gasped.

" That's what I said," he nodded. " I'm Ike Jacobson, the biggest and best fight promoter. Every boxer who works for Ike Jacobson will tell you he wouldn't work for another. I treat my boys right. You're at school, eh? "

All this took me by surprise, but I soon realised that the poor chap thought that I had knocked out Alf, and was a world-beater in the making.

" Where's your Headmaster? " he asked.

I pointed to the Head who was stirring slightly on the ground.

" There he is," I said. " Alf knocked him out."

" Hey, mister," cried Jacobson, stirring the Head with a patent leather shoe. " I'm coming right along to your school to talk turkey— "

The Head was just sitting up, and he gave Jacobson a glassy-eyed stare.

" Huh? " he said, blankly.

" Turkey," repeated Jacobson rolling his cigar across his mouth.

" No' f' me," said the Head with a shudder. " I'll just have soup and Christmas pudding."

" Carry him to my car," Jacobson snorted to Jem. " I'll drive him to the school. You boys get into the back. You," he turned again to Jem, " warn that pudding brained dumb-wit fighter of yours to stay away from this new find of mine. Or else— "

I glanced at Bob Day with a grim smile. Things seemed to be moving a lot faster than we could keep pace with.

Luckily the Head came round, and we helped him to his feet. He stroked his chin and looked down at Alf who was just starting to stir.

" So I knocked him out, too? " said the Head. " Perhaps the force of my own blow sent me reeling back and I stunned myself? "

" You got knocked cold by that fair-ground dope," Jacobson rasped. " Then this boy of yours—this world-beater—knocked him cold with a punch between the eyes. Step in my car, Headmaster, and we'll go to the school and talk this over."

" I have my own car," frowned the Head.

" Then follow me! I'll take the boys, and their bikes."

But the Head still didn't understand and he frowned at the fight promoter.

" Are you telling me that Jones, here," he said, pointing to me in what I thought was an off-hand and contemptuous way, " knocked out that tough hooligan-who-er felled me? "

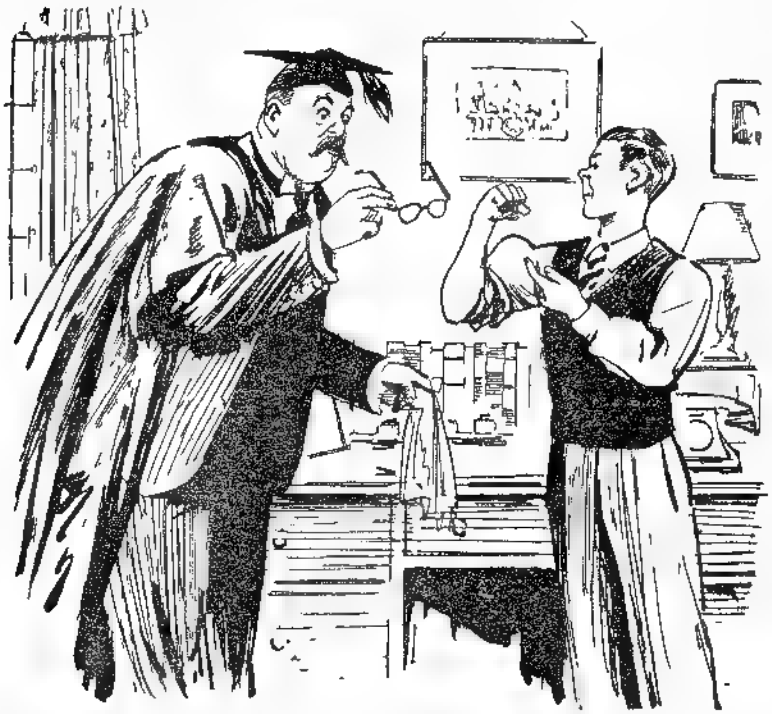
" That," explained Mr. Jacobson patiently, " is what I'm trying to tell you, sir, and you'll appreciate

it fully when you're more fully recovered. I'm going to take that boy, Jones and make him into a world-beater. He's going to be a credit to your school and you. He's going to make headlines."

" H'm," said the Head frowning.

After packing our bikes on behind, Bob and I scrambled into the luxury limousine, but Mr Jacobson suddenly decided that he would ride with the Head.

As our car swept off, Bob gave me a baffled look



Proudly Jingo bent his arm, displaying his mighty "muscle." "It's amazing—absolutely fantastic," exclaimed the Head. But he'd have said something entirely different if he'd known that Jingo was japing him!

" Gosh, you're for it now, Jingo," he said in awe. " You certainly diddled Alf, and taught him a lesson, and thanks a lot for coming to the rescue. But it looks to me as though there'll be some fireworks pretty shortly."

" You're right," I mused. " I've got myself in deeper than I meant, and it's not easy to see how even the invisibiliser can get me out of this."

But just how bad it was I didn't realise until we got to school.

JINGO " MUSCLES-IN "

IT was some time later that the Head sent for me. He was alone in his study when I looked in. He was still stroking his jaw, but he looked none the worse for having been knocked out.

" You wanted to see me, sir? " I enquired politely.

The Head stroked out his moustache left and right, and stared at me.

" My boy! " he said, " I did not realise you had such a terrific punch."

" Ahem," I coughed modestly.

" I am astounded," mused the Head, looking at me over his glasses. " Of course, when I was young I was something of a fighter. I had a punch my companions dreaded. I sometimes lay awake at nights fearing the possible consequences if failing to realise my own strength, I might stun some poor fellow into unconsciousness. You, too, Jones must be guarded."

" Yes, sir," I said, hiding a grin. " I will."

" Let me feel your muscles," suggested the Head suddenly.

He made me hold out my arm and then bend it at the elbow, tightening what he called the biceps. He pressed my arm and gave a start of surprise

" Where are your biceps, Jones? " he asked sharply, as though I had hidden them somewhere.

" Well, there, sir," I said, pointing to my arm.

" But you appear to have no muscles," he said in a surprised voice " How could you deliver such a punch with no muscles? "

Of course, the very last thing I wanted was for suspicion to be aroused in such a way that the invisibiliser became suspect. I had played too many tricks on the Head for that. Once he found the truth about one, he'd guess the truth about the others, and life wouldn't be worth living.

I had to think quickly.

" Er—I haven't always got muscles, sir," I admitted. " It's possibly something more mysterious than you know."

I took off my jacket with a flourish.

" Now sir, there's nothing up my sleeve, is there? "

" Only your arm," frowned the Head. " So what, my boy? "

Now on his desk was a cricket ball.

Unseen by the Head, I switched the invisibiliser on to it, and the ball vanished—at least it was still there, as solid as ever, but invisible.

I picked it up, but the Head saw nothing in my hand

" Now, sir, observe closely," I said, pushing the invisible cricket ball up my shirt sleeve. " I give a touch to a muscle and, lo— "

This time when I flexed my arm, the cricket ball showed up

" It's amazing absolutely fantastic," cried the Head, as he felt my arm, and the cricket ball. " That muscle is as hard as iron."

" Now—the relaxed position," I said.

Keeping the ball on my arm by pressing the forearm against it, I drew back my sleeve, so showing nothing but my rather skinny upper arm. Then I drew the sleeve down again, and the bulge showed and could be felt once more.

The Head looked utterly baffled, and, all things considered, it was a pretty nifty trick, impossible without the invisibiliser.

" Amazing," he said. " That probably accounts for your punch, Jones."

" Yes, sir It's a matter of knack rather than

strength," I explained, getting worked up a bit, and perhaps showing off slightly. "For instance that book on your desk, it's pretty heavy, isn't it?"

"You are referring to Economic Evolution of Medieval Europe?" asked the Head. "It is rather heavy in the main but there are some good laughs here and there."

"I refer to its weight, sir," I said patiently. "Do you think you could lift that book with finger and thumb from a kneeling position."

The Head peered at me.

"Lift that book? From a kneeling position?" he said. "Why not?"

The book lay on the edge of his desk and I knelt down and extended my arm. I picked up the book in my finger and thumb.

"Of course, it's a knack," I smiled faintly.

The Head looked from the book to me.

"Do you seriously think I couldn't pick that book up as you did, Jones? Really, boy!" he snorted. "I've half a mind to cane you for insolence. I'll soon show you."

The Head knelt down, pulling up his trouser-legs so as not to crease them. While he was preparing himself for the test, I used the invisibiliser again. This time I made six volumes of his encyclopedia invisible and plonked them on top of the other book, but of course, the Head didn't see them.

"Don't strain yourself, sir," I warned.

The Head gripped the book in his finger and thumb. But he couldn't lift it. Considering there were six heavy volumes on top of it that wasn't surprising, of course, but he wasn't to know that they were there—invisible.

"That's funny," he said, going red in the face, and getting a little peeved.

Finally he used the finger and thumb of both hands, and puffed and gasped. But still he couldn't do it.

"Jones, let me see you do that again," he ordered.

I removed the invisible volumes first, but as he couldn't see them, he didn't guess what I was up to. To him, I seemed to be making mysterious passes.

That done, I knelt down and without effort, picked up the book.

The Head stood biting the end of his moustache. He was in such a temper I wonder he didn't tear the book up and jump on it.

Luckily the telephone bell rang before he could do anything.

"What? Mr. Jacobson. Oh yes, you have Tiger Teeling there? Well, who is he? Oh yes, the next flyweight champion of the world, eh? A killer—and you want Jones matched against him?"

The Head looked at me, and perhaps he saw me give a violent start.

"I should be very pleased to see someone take the rise out of Jones—I mean," he corrected himself, "it would be dangerous if Jones became overconfident. Of course, you appreciate Mr. Jacobson, that Jones' uncle would have to be consulted. The decision to launch him on to a career as world-beating pugilist is not mine to make. However, a try-out with this Tiger will decide whether Jones' future really lies in that direction."

He hung up the receiver, smirked and rubbed his hands.

"Jones, you defeated me in that little contest—"

"Only by a trick, sir," I said hurriedly.

"Well, you will have need of all the tricks you can muster. Mr. Jacobson intends to match you against a lad named Tiger Teeling. If you succeed in knocking him out or making any impression on him at all, your future as a fighter is assured. Tiger Teeling has knocked out his last six opponents in the first round, and three are not fully recovered yet."

I did not make a rush to the door to get started. In fact, to be honest, I quaked.

"You—you think I ought to go on with this, sir?" I said anxiously.

"My boy! If you knocked out that tough hooligan, Alf, you must have a terrific punch. I cannot compel you to go, and would not even try to influence your decision. If you do not wish to go, say so."

"Ahem, perhaps it would be better if I did a little sparring in the school gym first, sir," I said uneasily.

"Very well," agreed the Head, stroking his moustache. "I will get Sergeant Bellow to try on the gloves with you. He was a boxing instructor in the army, and should be able to assess your worth. If you can knock him out," he added with a glint in his eye, "that will be proof indeed that your future lies in boxing."

"You'd like me to knock him out, sir?" I asked.

"Certainly. May the better man win," said the Head eagerly with a smirk. "Take care not to injure Sergeant Bellow, but by all means knock him out, my boy."

The Head went off, purring, to make arrangements, for I was well aware that he would have liked the chance of knocking out the sergeant himself. The sergeant has been wished on to the Head by one of the school governors who has an idea that the Head doesn't know how to discipline boys, and keeps offering the Head advice which he never takes.

I had piled up trouble for myself in plenty. Thanks to the cricket ball and the invisible volumes, I had convinced the Head that I was strong, but that hadn't got me out of the jam.

How was I going to convince the Head that I wasn't a good boxer, and yet let him believe I had knocked out Alf? And how was I going to stand up in the ring against Sergeant Bellow?

If the sergeant made me look silly, and I ran out of breath after two minutes, the Head would refuse to let me fight the Tiger. That would be dandy—except that I wasn't looking forward to being biffed around the ring by the heavy handed sergeant who hasn't a clue to his own strength. He once put a prefect out for ten minutes in a boxing lesson and broke the sports master's nose in a friendly sparring match.

I couldn't possibly back out though, I just had to think of some useful dodge.

The Head didn't intend to make it a public exhibition, he said. But he let me have Bob Day, for my second, so I hurried off to the form room and got Bob excused from lessons. In a few words, I told my pal what had happened.

" You mean you're going to fight the sergeant? ' said Bob. " In the gym? But he'll slaughter you, Jingo."

" Yes," I agreed ruefully. " Unless— "

" Unless what? " asked Bob hopefully.

I whispered the plan that I had just thought out, and Bob gave a soft whistle.

" It might work," he commented slowly. " In fact, it will jolly well have to—it's your only hope "

TAMING " THE TIGER "

IN the gym, the sergeant, stripped to the waist, was punching the bag to get into trim. It's a fifty-six pound bag, but you'd think it weighed only fifty-six ounces the way he hits it.

Wham! Bang!

As the heavy bag swung back he met it with his fist and dented the heavy, sand packed canvas. You could hear the thud right through the gym, yet he didn't seem to be trying

" Sure your plan will work? " asked Bob nervously. " What am I to say to your uncle if it doesn't? "

" Ass! I'll be all right," I said.

" Well, here comes the Head We'd better hurry," urged Bob.

The Head strode into the gym, and nodded to the sergeant, while Bob fitted two large cushions to me, back and front, and roped them securely on. I needn't tell you that the cushions were invisible, thanks to the gadget, and I daresay some of you smarter chaps will guess why I wanted the cushions.

A fencing mask, nicely padded inside, went over my head, and that, too, was invisible—the mask, I mean!

There was no question of a fair fight. I didn't stand a chance. Nothing hung on the fight, so I could regard it as a fair leg pull, provided it kept me out of trouble.

The Head and the sergeant were talking as Bob rigged me up in my invisible defences.

" You really mean to tell me, sir," said Sergeant Bellow in a tone of almost contemptuous disbelief, " that young Jones knocked out Alf, the Merciless Mauler. Whoever said they were there when it happened must be half witted."

" Is that so? Well, I was there! " snapped the Head indignantly.

" You saw it happen? "

" I–er–I was myself prone and unconscious at the time," said the Head with some embarrassment, " having been knocked out by Alf at my own request."

" At your own request? " echoed the sergeant in amazement. " Well, sir, when you feel you need knocking out," he added in a hurt tone, " you don't have to go to strange boxers. I'm always around, and my punch is as good as Alf's."

" Perhaps," said the Head coldly, " you, too, may soon know what it is to be knocked out if Jones delivers his K.O. punch."

The sergeant gasped. His jaw dropped, and then he hooted with laughter.

" Ho, ho, ho! Jones knock me out? That's rich! Ha, ha, ha! "

" Jones! Are you ready to enter the ring with the sergeant? " the Head called to me.

" Y–Yes, sir," I said.

" You are not nervous? "

" Well " I said.

" Ha, ha, ha! " roared the sergeant.

" I'm slightly nervous in case I might do him an injury as he's an elderly man past the prime of life, sir," I said gravely. " But I'll pull my heaviest punches."

The sergeant stopped laughing abruptly at that.

" Past the prime of life? " he muttered, his eyes narrowing.

I went to my corner, and took off the blanket I had had wrapped round me. Of course, the cushions were invisible, and my own figure showed up clearly, stripped above the waist except for a vest.

" Pfffff," went the sergeant, trying to smother a burst of mirth at sight of me.

Of course, if he hadn't been so amused he might have felt Bob Day hitching one end of an elastic exerciser round his waist. The other end was hitched to the ring post in his corner. Naturally, I had made the exerciser invisible

" Time," said the Head who was refereeing.

The sergeant rushed at me—but I just stood my ground, put my hands on my hips and let him hammer away with his fists on the invisible cushions strapped to my chest

Then I stepped back. The sergeant tried to follow me but was brought to a halt by the elastic exerciser.

I got just out of range to lure him beyond the limit of the elastic. He did get beyond the limit slightly, which shows how tough he is. Then he started to lean backwards as the thing pulled him.

I hit him on the chest. As punches go, I don't suppose it was terrific. But it just was enough to send him tottering back and once he tottered he couldn't seem to stop. The terrifically powerful elastic exerciser pulled him back!

He lost his balance and footing and seemed to be running backwards until he suddenly fell full length

" Careful, Jones," warned the Head. " You knocked him back three feet! "

I did some more prancing and the surprised sergeant got up, looked behind him and all around.

" Someone was pulling me from behind," he muttered.

" No one was pulling you. There was no one there, sergeant," rapped the Head. " It is merely that the terrific force of Jones' punch made it seem to you that you were being pulled back."

The sergeant scowled and made a rush at me. He reached the end of the elastic's stretch and again was stopped in his tracks. As he tottered backwards, I rushed in and hit him with the old one-two.

Back he went, almost running, and landed. The crash shook the gym, and just as he landed, in came Mr. Jacobson.

" I have brought the Tiger," he began. Then he looked at the sergeant and from him to me. " Hey what's happened? "

"Five—six—" counted the Head.

The sergeant tried to rise, but he couldn't. The reason was that the elastic exerciser was now round his chest holding him down. When he tried to sit up, he was pulled back as though fired from a catapult; and his head rocked the ring's floor.

"Eight—nine—out!" shouted the Head.

The sergeant tottered up as Bob freed the invisible elastic, and I looked across at the Tiger.

"You knocked him out?" he asked me, pointing to the sergeant.

"Looks like it," I said modestly.

"O K. That settles it. I don't fight him," said the Tiger to Mr. Jacobson. "Not if he can knock out a heavyweight, even a flabby, flat footed—Uggg!" he ended, as the sergeant, who had stood more than enough, fetched him a short jab in the middle.

"That's tamed the Tiger," rapped the sergeant in satisfaction as the Tiger went down with a terrific flop.

"My boy, my champ, you damaged him," howled Mr. Jacobson at the sergeant. "He's never been knocked out before."

I strode forward.

"Sergeant," I commanded, "leave this to me!"

Then I turned to Mr Jacobson "You, sir, get out of here and take your Tiger with you. I never want to see your face again"

I pointed to the door of the gym and remembering what I had done to the sergeant and the sergeant had done to the Tiger, Mr. Jacobson backed away quickly.

"And never come near this school again or else, see " I said in typical film gangster fashion. 'Sergeant," I called "pick up the Tiger and carry him back to his den."

"Do as Jones tells you, sergeant," said the Head with a wary glance at me.

The sergeant picked the Tiger up, and took him to Mr Jacobson's car while the Head followed with the boxer's hat, which had fallen off

"Well, Bob, how was that?" I asked my pal.

"Grand! But, by gosh, it won't be if you don't take those cushions off. They've become visible!" he yelped. "The effect of the invisibiliser has worn off!"

The one on my front had burst, but the cushion covers and the ropes were in full view, and so was the elastic, which we both noticed, trailing behind the sergeant as he went out of the door.

"Gosh, if the Head sees them, you'll be for the high jump, Jingo," cried Bob.

"Where's the invisibiliser?" I yelped suddenly.

I remembered it was in my jacket, and where was my jacket? Bob hauled the rope and cushion off me just as the Head and the sergeant returned. I found the invisibiliser just as they re-entered the gym, but I was in such a panic that I pressed the wrong button and made both Bob and myself invisible.

"H'm, Jones seems to have gone, sergeant," frowned the Head. "But what's that hanging down behind you? It looks like part of an elastic exerciser. Why on earth did you put that on?"

The sergeant twisted round and goggled at his "tail."

"No wonder I seemed to feel something pulling me," he said in amazement. "But why didn't I see it?"

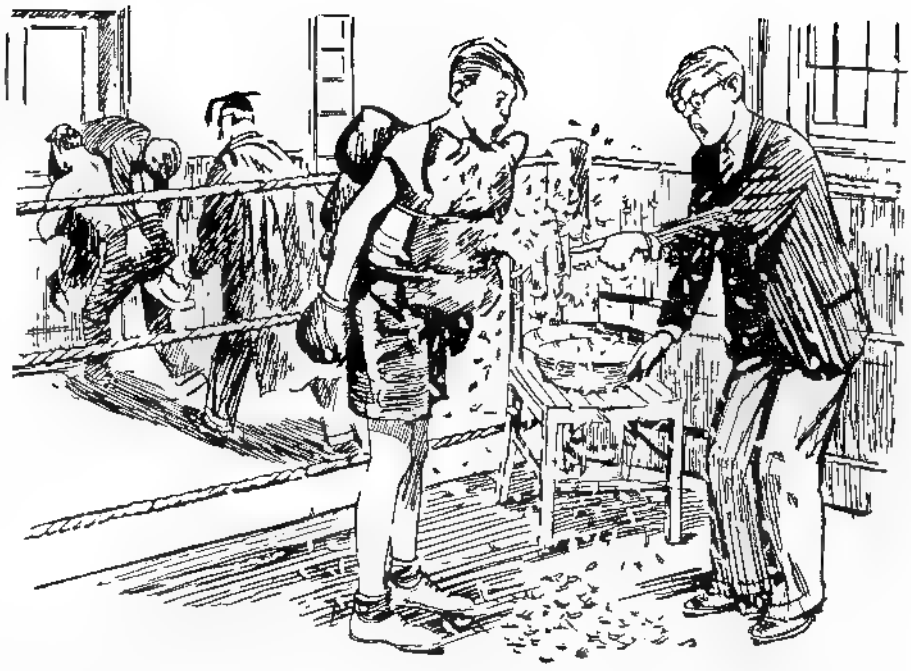
The Head didn't answer; he was staring at the ring.

"Sergeant, the ring is covered with small feathers. Most extraordinary!" he cried. Then he gave a loud chortle "Haw, haw evidently Jones did knock the stuffing out of you. Haw, haw!"

"Haw, haw!" echoed the sergeant nastily and scowling at the feathers.

Bob and I, still invisible, stole quietly away. I read somewhere that mystery is good for encouraging mental development, whatever that is. Well, there was mystery in plenty here for the sergeant and the Head to solve

But despite all the clues I had left around, they never did discover the answer to where I got my amazing "strength"—thank goodness!



Jingo stared down at himself in dismay. For the invisible pillows he'd worn as protection in his sparring bout had come suddenly into view. "Gosh, if the Head sees them, you'll be for the high jump!" Bob Day cried.

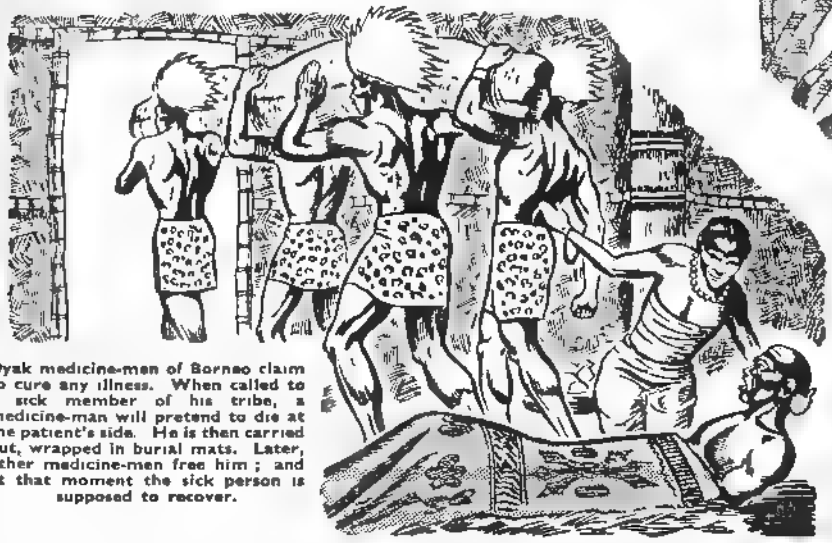
The WEIRD WAYS

Paying a witch-doctor to hurt an enemy with " magic " is still a common practice among the inhabitants of some uncivilised countries. Many Asiatic witch-doctors will make a wax image of a " customer's " enemy, and pierce it with a sharp thorn. It is believed that the enemy will, as a result, begin to suffer severe pain, which can only be relieved by another witch-doctor

Indian magicians in ancient times had a strange cure for jaundice. They covered the patient with yellow porridge, and tied yellow birds to the end of his bed. Then they washed off the porridge, believing that the jaundice would leave the patient and go into the birds

Australian aborigines eat insect grubs ; they regard them as a great delicacy. When a tribe discovers that the grubs are in short supply, they call in their witch-doctor. He sometimes orders them to build a small hut in the shape of a grub's chrysalis. As soon as the hut is completed, men of the tribe gather inside, and, when called by the witch-doctor, hop out of the doorway. After this weird ceremony, the natives believe that grubs will appear in plenty around their village.

Witch-doctors often undertake to stop rain. The method used by the rain-doctor of a Celebes tribe is to light a fire of certain woods. He then holds leaves and bark, and blows dry lime at the clouds which he hopes will shortly disappear !



Dyak medicine-men of Borneo claim to cure any illness. When called to a sick member of his tribe, a medicine-man will pretend to die at the patient's side. He is then carried out, wrapped in burial mats. Later, other medicine-men free him ; and at that moment the sick person is supposed to recover.

# of Witch-Doctors

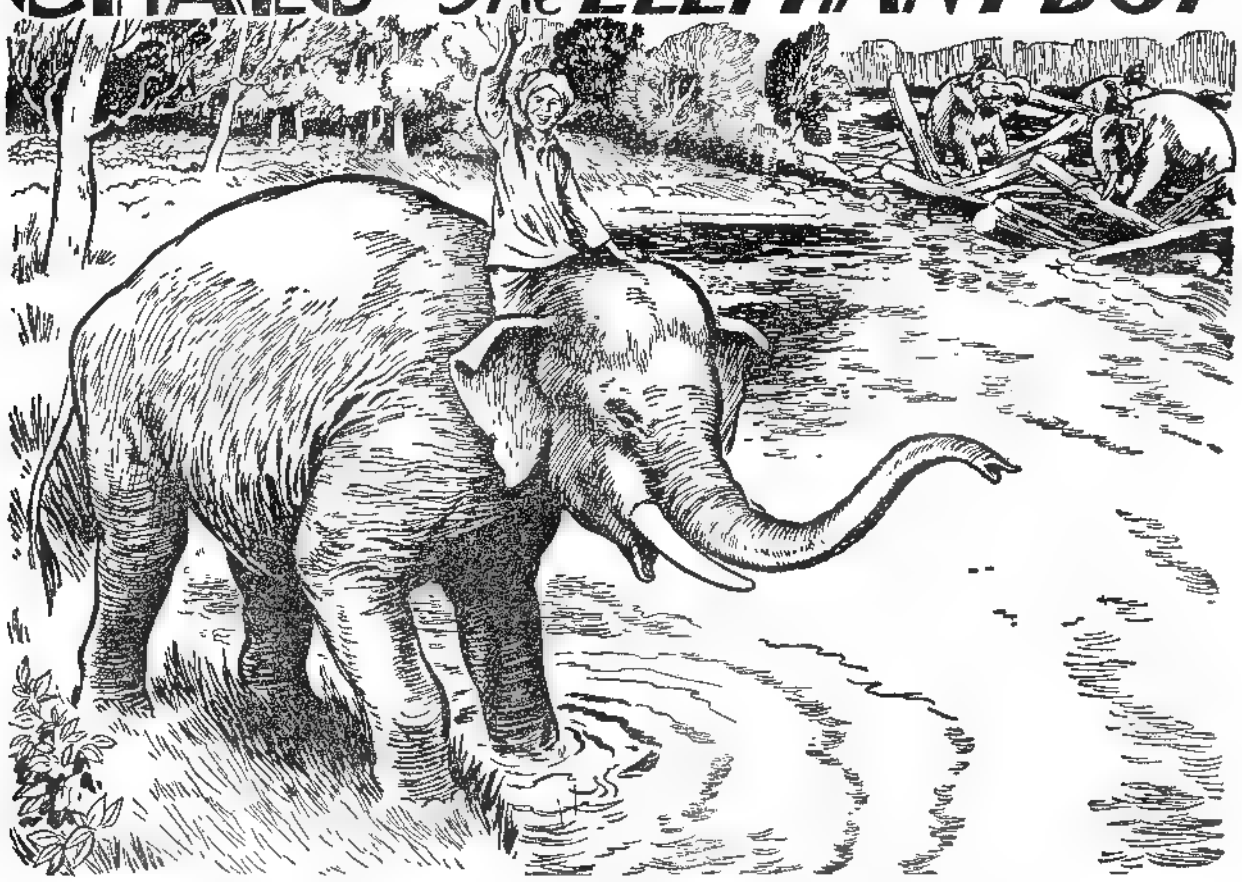
When some African savages feel pain, they think that it is being caused by a rival who has bewitched them. So they rush to consult the witch-doctor, who usually has several ways of "curing" the trouble. One way is for the witch-doctor to cut some hair from the head of the native who is thought to have bewitched the sufferer. The hair is then thrown on to a fire.

The sorcerers in Cambodia had an odd "prescription" for natives who complained that they couldn't catch enough fish. The unsuccessful fishermen were told to wrap themselves up in their nets for a time. When they emerged, the nets were supposed to have the power to catch plenty of fish.

"Rain-making" is an important art among savages. In time of drought, New Caledonian rain-doctors poured water over a skeleton, and let it drip on to leaves of a certain kind. If the drought continued after this, then the rain-makers became highly unpopular with their tribe

An eclipse of the sun often terrifies savages. When an eclipse occured, the medicine-men of the Peruvian Indians would tell their warriors to shoot burning arrows at the sun, in order to drive away the fierce animal they believed was attacking it.

CHALU The ELEPHANT BOY



HAD HIS ELEPHANT PAL TURNED ROGUE?

By John Barnes

CHALU, the young Indian boy, stared with a look of horror and disbelief on his face. He felt on his shoulder the soft trunk of Tooska, his elephant pal, standing behind him, and he put up one lean brown hand to pat it soothingly. But Chalu did not take his eyes from the stern, weary face of Mr. Steve Carter, his employer.

"No! No, Carter Sahib! It cannot be true!" said Chalu fiercely.

"There isn't any doubt about it, Chalu," frowned Carter, manager of the teak company, for whom Chalu and Tooska worked. "I know how you feel about Tooska that he is your greatest friend. But once an elephant has turned rogue, Chalu, there's nothing anybody can do about it. Tooska must be shot!"

"But Tooska is not a rogue elephant!' burst out Chalu desperately. "He is the best and wisest elephant in the company, Sahib!"

"He was," nodded Steve Carter. "He was the best elephant in the whole Massani territory—in the whole of India, if you like. But you admit that he wasn't tethered to his picket with the other elephants last night, don't you?"

"Yes, Sahib," nodded the Indian boy. "But Tooska is not as other elephants are He is the wise one, the trusted one. He likes to wander abroad in the jungle at night You know all this, Sahib, and you have never forbidden it."

"I blame myself for what has happened," returned Carter grimly. "Last night Tooska went rogue. He wrecked the native village of Denhi, five miles west of here, smashing every mud-hut in the clearing. It's lucky nobody was hurt, but they heard him trumpeting and crashing through the jungle as he approached, and the villagers scattered. Their Head-man came to me this morning and told me of this."

"It was not Tooska, sahib!" cut in Chalu. "If he had done it he would not have been standing quietly by his picket at dawn!"

Steve Carter took the pipe from his mouth and pointed at Tooska's great shoulder. From the top of the elephant's right foreleg, and stretching in a triangle up to the broad back, there was a brownish-black patch. It was a huge scar.

He Dared Deadly Danger To Unmask Some Jungle Plotters

" That mark," said Carter quietly. " There's not another elephant in the country marked like that."

Chalu's chin lifted proudly.

" No, sahib," he returned. " And there is not another elephant who would have done what Tooska did to cause that mark ! You have not forgotten ? "

Steve Carter sighed. He had not forgotten. It was still very clear in his memory, that day three years ago, after the wild elephants had been driven into the big stockade for training.

Near the stockade, much too near, there was a bamboo hut which had caught fire and burned like a monstrous torch. The elephants went mad with fear, stampeding and threatening to burst through the stockade walls.

And then young Chalu had arrived with Tooska. Under his master's urging, Tooska had smashed into the blazing hut, ripping it from the ground, pushing it away with lowered head, trampling it and scattering the blazing fragments.

Afterwards, Tooska had gone into the stockade with little Chalu on his back. There he had tackled the fear-crazed elephants, buffeting them and bullying them until at last they were quiet.

The mark on his back was a burn from the blazing hut, and Tooska would carry it all his life.

" I can still remember how Tooska came by that scar," the manager nodded. " And that makes it harder for me to say what must be said. It is by that very mark that the natives of the wrecked village knew Tooska. They saw the patch on his shoulder clearly in the moonlight. Tooska has the rogue in him, Chalu, and he must die."

Chalu sought desperately for words. Even if a thousand natives had seen Tooska, Chalu still would not have believed that his elephant pal could turn rogue. Yet he knew by the look on Sahib Carter's face that it was hopeless to plead for Tooska's life.

Suddenly there came the snarling roar of an engine, and a small, open car came bumping over the rough ground of the big encampment. It drew up near Carter, and a white man in a worn bush-hat climbed out.

This was Markham, who managed a timber company's territory The territories worked by the two companies were next to each other, and there was keen rivalry between them.

" Hallo, Carter," began Markham easily, stroking his thin, black moustache. " I hear that an elephant caused trouble at Denhi village last night. I've checked all my animals, and can plead not guilty. I thought—— "

" It was one of mine," confessed Carter. " Don't worry, Markham. Your company won't have to pay compensation to the villagers ! "

Markham was staring from Carter to the great bulk of Tooska

" You surely don't mean to tell me that it was Tooska ? " he jerked out. " I can't believe it ! "

" It's true enough," grunted Carter. " Because of him, there's a load of compensation to pay—and he has to be shot into the bargain This will look fine in my report ! "

" I'm sorry," smirked Markham. " You seem to be having a lot of trouble lately."

Carter ignored him and turned to Chalu.

" In one hour Tooska will have to be shot, Chalu," he announced. Then he turned and walked glumly across the encampment towards his office.

Markham shrugged.

" Carter Sahib doesn't seem to like my company," he murmured, turning to Chalu. " This is a sad day for Chalu," he said, shaking his head sorrowfully.

The young Indian boy nodded, unable to speak. He did not like Markham Sahib, but any word of sympathy was welcome at this moment. The thought that his mighty elephant pal, Tooska, was to be shot within one hour was like a nightmare.

" Carter Sahib is hasty," went on Markham cunningly. " Perhaps if he had time to think about this, Chalu, he would change his mind. But in one hour it will be too late." He turned and stared towards the distant green fringe of the jungle, then glanced back meaningly at Chalu.

The young Indian was also gazing towards the jungle, with growing purpose in his eyes. The words of Markham had put an idea into his head.

If he took Tooska away, into the jungle, for a few days, Carter Sahib might cancel the huge elephant's death sentence !

Chalu muttered a word of command, and Tooska's trunk wrapped about him and lifted him to the broad back. Next moment Tooska was moving quietly across the sun-baked ground towards the jungle !

Markham rubbed his chin and grinned. Chalu was doing just what the manager of the timber company wanted him to do.

Still grinning, Markham stepped into his car and drove off !

CHALU CAPTURED !

AN hour had gone by, and Tooska, the elephant, was moving silently through the dense jungle. He did not seem to hurry, and his huge feet hovered for a split second each time they touched the ground. Not a twig snapped, not a bamboo creaked as he walked.

" Carter Sahib will be very angry with me," Chalu murmured as he sat on the swaying back. " But that is better than for you to be dead, Tooska ! "

Later, in a small clearing, Chalu squatted on the ground and ate the fruit which Tooska had plucked from a tree for him. Tooska stood nearby, munching tender bamboo shoots and watching his young master.

Although forty years old, Tooska was in his prime. He was king of the many elephants employed by Steve Carter's company. There was none more skilled at manoeuvring a mighty teak log over difficult country. And when the dreaded log jams choked the river Tooska would move across the terrifying pile with the skill of a wire-walker, and free the key logs.

Tooska was very wise, and he owned only one master—Chalu. As he munched, Tooska knew that Chalu was greatly troubled.

" All is wrong, Tooska," sighed Chalu, who often

talked to the great elephant. " The natives of Denhi village would not lie. They believe that they saw you wrecking their huts, and so there must have been some trickery. Come, Big One. We will go to see this village."

Under Chalu's guidance, Tooska set off again, moving like a great shadow through the jungle. Two hundred paces from the edge of the wrecked village of Denhi, Chalu slipped down to the ground

" Wait, Tooska ! " the young elephant boy murmured, fondling the soft tip of the trunk which coiled over his shoulders. " Follow me not, but stay here until my return ! "

Next moment Chalu was gliding through the foliage towards the clearing. Screened by thick bushes, he saw the wreckage of the mud-and straw huts. Here and there, natives were starting on the long task of rebuilding their broken homes.

Chalu watched for a while, then drew back a little way and began to make a circle round the village clearing. He moved very slowly, his dark eyes scanning the ground and the undergrowth. It took him an hour to work his way round to the far side of the village—and then he found what he was seeking !

No white man's eyes could have read the signs, but Chalu could read them like a book. He saw a crushed patch of grass here, a cluster of wild-pepper vines torn down there, and his eyes moved from sign to sign as if following a trail.

It was a trail. Chalu knew that the rogue elephant who had attacked Denhi village must have passed that way. He saw where the elephant had halted, and where it had started its wild charge.

He began to move back along the trail, a look of wonderment grew in his face.

The way of the rogue elephant did not lead to Carter Sahib's encampment. It led to the North, to the narrow stream which formed the border between the territories of the two rival companies.

" It must have been an elephant from the camp of Markham Sahib—he who has black hair growing on his lip," Chalu told himself eagerly. He did not like the sallow-faced Markham with his thin black moustache.

For a moment Chalu paused. He had left the village more than a mile behind now, and he was wondering if he should return for Tooska. His huge pal would be worrying about him.

" First I will follow the trail to the river," Chalu murmured, " and then I shall know for sure that the elephant came from Markham Sahib's territory "

He moved on steadily, his eyes on the ground ahead as he sought out the faint trail of the elephant.

He failed to see the brown face which peered at him from the tangle of foliage—a narrow face with skin drawn taut over bony features. The eyes were black and cunning. It was the face of Mura Tal, chief mahout, or elephant-driver, of Markham Sahib !

Chalu did not hear the faint rustle of dry grass as Mura Tal circled behind and drew close to him. Like a spider creeping upon its prey, Mura Tal stole up upon the unsuspecting Indian boy.

At the last moment an instinct of danger warned Chalu. He started to turn, and in that instant he heard the sudden hiss of indrawn breath. Then something crashed with stunning force upon his head. A great light seemed to explode within his brain, and he dropped in a limp heap to the ground !

" That teach you to come spying ! " spat Mura Tal, straightening up and looking down on his unconscious victim with a grin. He tossed aside the short length of wood he had used as a club, then tore down some thin, trailing vines to bind Chalu's wrists and ankles.

" Markham Sahib will be very pleased ! " Mura Tal muttered to himself, his black eyes glinting.

AN AMAZING ESCAPE PLAN

CHALU felt himself rising through seas of darkness like a swimmer coming to the surface. His head throbbed, and when he opened his eyes the light seemed to stab at his brain.

He was lying on a board floor. There was something cold and heavy on one of his ankles. He moved the leg slightly, and heard the chink of a chain.

" So you have awakened, Chalu ! " said a voice.

Chalu rolled over and lifted his head. He was in a lamp-lit room. Through a small window he could see that dusk had fallen. Markham Sahib was sprawled in a rush chair beside a wooden table, grinning at him.

Chalu felt a tug at his ankle. Glancing down, he saw Mura Tal crouched nearby with a short metal crowbar in his hands. With that crowbar the mahout had just completed the task of screwing a thick iron staple into a stout teak stanchion. From the ring of the staple ran a length of chain, ending in a circlet of steel. The circlet was clamped about Chalu's right ankle, chaining him to the wall.

" Why—why have you chained me like an animal, Markham Sahib ? " he stammered in amazement.

" Because you were too curious, Chalu," came the grinning reply. " And because it pleases me to have you in my care now that Tooska has left the encampment of Carter Sahib and is at large in the jungle ! "

" I—I do not understand, sahib," muttered Chalu.

" You have work to do tonight, Mura Tal," said Markham, turning to the mahout. " You must wait until two hours after midnight, and then you and your elephant, Kundra-Ga, can take our friend Chalu far into the jungle."

" And return alone, sahib ? " said Mura Tal with a dry cackle. " It is understood ! Chalu has learned too much, and he must not tell what he has learned ! "

Markham shrugged.

" Your other work must wait until tomorrow night," he said, rising. " But that is of little matter."

Mura Tal nodded evilly.

" It shall be done, sahib, I will paint the same great black mark on Kundra-Ga as I did the other night when he wrecked the village of Denhi. But this time it will be the Tukari village which will suffer ! They will cry out against Carter Sahib for what has been done, believing the elephant to be Tooska. Then there will be more troubles for Carter Sahib ! "

Chalu's brain was in a whirl. Now he knew how it came about that Tooska had been blamed for the smashing of Denhi village. Kundra Ga, Mura Tal's elephant, had done it at Markham Sahib's command!

But why? Why should Markham Sahib make such trouble for Carter Sahib?

"I'll leave everything to you, Mura Tal," said Markham, and moved to the door. "I'm not interested in the details—so long as everything goes smoothly!"

The door slammed, and Chalu heard the manager's feet clatter down the bare narrow stairs of the two-floor wooden building.

Mura Tal picked up the lamp and examined the chain that held Chalu.

"It is well," he sneered. "Do not cry for help, Chalu, for there is nobody to hear you Soon I will come again, and then we will go for a little journey into the jungle together! You will not return!"

Carrying the lamp, Mura Tal crossed to the door and went out.

Chalu stood for a while to let his eyes grow accustomed to the darkness. He guessed that he must be held prisoner in one of the store-rooms on the edge of the timber company's encampment It would be right away from the main quarters, and there was no hope of any cry for help being heard.

Chalu squatted in the darkness and rested his head on his hands. If he could escape he would tell Carter Sahib all that he had heard.

Chalu's head jerked up and his eyes widened. He had run away from the teak company's encampment with Tooska, against Carter Sahib's orders. The white man would be very angry, and he might not believe the story that Chalu had to tell!

The more he thought about it, the more doubtful Chalu felt. Carter Sahib would believe that it was a made-up story to save Tooska from being shot.

"It was Markham Sahib who put the thought into my mind to take Tooska into the jungle," Chalu told himself. "He wanted it so, for then he could cause Mura Tal to make more damage with his elephant! And Tooska would be blamed, for all the people of Massani know of Tooska and his great black mark"

With a start Chalu realised that he was thinking too far ahead. Before he could do anything he must escape—and that would not be easy. He was chained to solid teak

Chalu fumbled along the chain, his strong brown fingers feeling the links. They were as thick as a child's finger, and well made. For long minutes Chalu sat quite still. All seemed hopeless—yet a fierce and angry determination was burning within him

He remembered, long ago, seeing a massive chain being used for hauling teak logs snap across one link. The reason it had snapped was because the chain had been twisted!

A sudden gleam came into Chalu's eyes. He moved forward to the full stretch of the chain, fumbling for the tattered blanket he had noticed lying in one corner of the room

When he found it, he sat down patiently and tore several thin strips from the blanket. Then, very carefully, he began to wind the strips of blanket round the circlet enclosing his ankle. At last the task was completed, and the metal ring was well padded with cloth so that it fitted snugly round his ankle.

"Now—" breathed Chalu, and turned head over heels on the floor He repeated the strange action again and again. As he did so the chain coiled and twisted, growing short as the links knotted one over the other!

After the twelfth somersault Chalu was unable to

Recovering from the knock-out blow he'd received, Chalu found himself in a small store-room. Fearlessly he eyed the sneering white man seated opposite him. "Why have you chained me to the wall like an animal, Markham Sahib?" he demanded angrily

turn any farther. He lay on his back, his right leg up in the air. The chain was now locked in a short length, as stiff as a bar of iron, jutting from the staple to his ankle.

Chalu lay still for a long time, breathing deeply. His lithe young body was finely muscled, and he was a boy of more than usual strength. Grimly Chalu realised that he would need all his strength for what was to come.

He swayed the raised right leg backwards a little, easing the tension on the chain. Then every muscle in his body snapped taut as he put every effort into a flailing, downward swing of that right leg. A stab of pain brought a gasp to his lips—and then there came a dull snapping sound, and his heel thudded down on the wooden floor!

Shakily Chalu rose to his feet. The brittle chain had snapped about six inches from the circlet. His leg, where the circlet had bitten in, was bruised and sore, but that was all. He had taken the first step towards freedom!

SAVED BY TOOSKA'S TRUNK

CHALU tucked the loose end of chain between the metal circlet and his ankle, and fixed it there with another piece of blanket wound round and round. He did not want to be hindered in his escape.

Silently he moved towards the door and turned the handle. The door was bolted on the outside!

Chalu stepped back and thought hard. He could no doubt break the door down, but that would make a noise, and perhaps Mura Tal had left a trusted man on guard outside the store-room.

With a shake of his head, Chalu turned towards the small window. Gently he eased open the shutters and peered out. The ground lay thirty feet below. Chalu knew that there would be no soft grass to receive him if he jumped. Here, the ground would be bare, and baked hard.

Fifty yards away in the moonlight lay the edge of the jungle. If he could once reach that shelter, he would be safe!

Warily Chalu leaned out so that he could see the outer wall of the tall store-room. A metal guttering ran along the edge of the corrugated iron roof above, but the wooden walls were smooth and bare, offering no hand-hold for climbing down. At the corner of the building, though, there was a pipe which offered an easy route to the ground.

Chalu leaned out——then drew back swiftly as a dark form paced slowly round the corner of the building. Mura Tal had left somebody on watch!

Grim-faced, Chalu waited until the man had passed then leaned out again.

The retreating figure was that of an Indian, and in the crook of his arm Chalu could make out the shape of a shot gun. No doubt the man was patrolling slowly round the long building, alert for any sign of trouble.

Chalu counted to himself, waiting for the man to complete the tour and reappear. It took, Chalu reckoned, just over one and a half minutes

That was bad. The young elephant boy would only have one and a half minutes to shuffle hand over hand along the guttering, climb down the drain-pipe, and reach the shelter of the jungle. It could be done. But it would be touch and go!

If anything went wrong Chalu knew that he would end up with a very unpleasant gun-shot wound a peppering that would not kill, but would certainly put an end to his chances of escape.

He waited for the guard to disappear once more, then swung lithely out on to the ledge of the window. Reaching up, he grasped the guttering and began to edge his way along the fifteen feet which separated him from the down-pipe.

The rough metal scored his hands, but Chalu barely felt the pain.

"The pipe," he was thinking as he clawed his way along with desperate haste. "If I can but reach the pipe, all will be simple!"

"——ah!"

He gasped as, with a faint screech of twisting metal, a section of the guttering gave under his weight! He dropped a few inches, and hung helplessly in the air!

The loose section was trembling, and he felt it give another inch. He moved one hand warily to take a fresh grip, but again the guttering sagged.

Chalu choked back a cry of despair. To move would bring disaster—and to stay where he was would also bring disaster. He heard the patter of bare feet, and the Indian guard came darting round the corner, attracted by the squeak of the broken guttering.

"Hai!" came a startled yell.

Chalu managed to turn his head and gaze down. The guard was staring up at his dangling figure, and even as Chalu watched he saw the man lift the gun to his shoulder.

"You cannot escape, boy!" cried the guard.

With head twisted awkwardly, Chalu blinked to make sure his eyes were not playing tricks on him. for a moment he had imagined that he saw a grey shape moving in the gloom beyond. Suddenly, he saw something like a great grey snake writhing in the darkness.

"Tooska!" croaked Chalu.

His elephant pal's trunk swung sideways, the tip of it catching the Indian guard across the side of the head with the power of a punch from a heavyweight boxer! The man crumpled, his gun falling to the ground, and a moment later Tooska's trunk curled gently about Chalu's waist and plucked him from his dangerous perch.

"Away, Tooska! Away!" breathed Chalu softly as he settled on the broad, swaying back. And silently as he had come, Tooska padded across the open stretch of ground and plunged into the jungle.

"Good, Tooska! You came to seek me, O Big One!" chuckled Chalu. The young Indian boy was excited at the sudden turn of fate which had brought him safely out of Mura Tal's clutches.

"Thy scent is keen," grinned Chalu. "You trailed me to the encampment, and waited in the

jungle, watching for some sign from me! Ha! There is no elephant so wise and so strong as Tooska!"

Tooska trumpeted softly, as if approving his young master's words.

It wasn't until an hour later, in Markham's encampment, that Mura Tal came to the manager with the news of Chalu's escape.

"It is beyond belief, sahib!" he said. "The chain was broken yet even the strongest hands could never have snapped those links! The man I left to watch the store-room remembers seeing Chalu on the guttering, but he remembers no more! Something struck him from behind, and his senses went away from him!"

Mura Tal shook his head wonderingly.

"The man's head aches very much," he added. "His neck is very stiff, sahib."

"I'm tempted to break it for him!" gritted Markham angrily. "Everything depends on what happens during the next few days, Mura Tal! And now there is danger that the boy will go to Carter and tell him how I've been working against him"

"You need not fear that, Markham Sahib," returned Mura Tal slowly. "I know how the mind of a mahout works. Chalu will not approach Carter Sahib, for he will risk the life of his beloved Tooska if he does Chalu will fear that Carter Sahib would never believe such a strange story, and insist on Tooska being shot as a rogue."

"M'm. Maybe you're right, Mura Tal," muttered Markham "The boy is in hot water with Carter for running off with that elephant. Maybe in time he might think it safe to return and tell his story—but by then it will be too late!

"Tomorrow night you shall once again disguise your elephant, Kundra Ga, as Tooska—and attack the village of Tukari!"

CHALU TO THE RESCUE!

IT was mid-afternoon, and the hot sun beat down fiercely on a scene of desperate action. From the shelter of the jungle, Chalu watched with anxious eyes.

With twenty elephants and their mahouts, Carter Sahib was trying to break up a jam caused by logs at a point seven miles up-river from his teak company's encampment. But things were not going well. The mighty teak logs were piling steadily higher as they came down stream

As the jam grew bigger, so did the problem of breaking it up become more difficult.

Carter Sahib, his face drawn, seemed to be here, there and everywhere, urging men and animals on. But some of the elephants had not long been broken-in and trained for such skilled work. They were growing restive and difficult to handle.

On one bank of the river, watching, was a man in shiny new shorts and shirt.

"It is a white man, Tooska," Chalu murmured. "But his skin is very pale, like that of a man who has but lately come to the hot countries."

Carter Sahib and the other white man were talking together Carter lifted his battered hat and wiped his brow Despair was in his tired eyes. His companion, Mr. John Farwell, senior director of the teak company, looked far from pleased.

"You've got to do something, Carter!" he rapped out. "If that jam lasts much longer, hundreds of tons of timber will be ruined by crushing and bruising!"

"I'm doing the best I can, sir," Carter said hoarsely. "I'm sorry that you should have flown out here for an inspection to find this sort of thing happening—but it looks to me as if the jam was caused deliberately. In my opinion, the section of bank which caved in and narrowed the river didn't do so by accident. It looks to me as if it's been blasted—and we did hear a dull explosion back in the encampment last night!"

"Rubbish!" snapped Farwell. "Nobody would do such a thing! You've been reporting far too many troubles recently, Carter! And what about this rogue elephant? Have you captured it yet?"

"I haven't had time——" began Carter, then broke off to stare over his chief's shoulder. A massive grey shape was moving from the jungle. It was an elephant with a strange black mark across its right flank and shoulder. Perched on its back was the bronzed figure of Chalu!

"Tooska!" croaked Carter.

Tooska headed straight for the river, where elephants were milling around the log jam in faltering attempts to break it up.

"Hai! Yai!" came the strong young voice of Chalu. "Ma-il, Tooska!" Shouts of amazement rose from the mahouts as they saw Chalu and the mighty Tooska bursting in amongst them.

Tooska lifted his trunk in a great trumpeting roar, and his head swung sideways to buffet a young elephant who was refusing to mount the pile of jammed logs.

The elephants knew Tooska—and were always willing to follow him.

In a matter of minutes the whole scene was changed. Three elephants were on the pile itself, clearing the loose logs which threatened to tumble down on their comrades standing shoulder-deep in the water below.

Tooska, testing every step he made, ensured that the elephants on the locked mass of timber were doing their job well, then lumbered down into the water. Nosing along the jam, his quick instinct picked out the key logs round which the rest had piled up. Next moment his great tusks were levering at the key logs.

With tusks and trunk he wrenched and heaved, trumpeting his commands to the other elephants working alongside him.

"Aiee!" cried Chalu exultantly. "On, Tooska! On!"

The log jam quivered, and Chalu shouted to the mahouts above to get their beasts off the top of the teak mass. Several logs which Tooska had wrenched away began to float on their way down-stream. Now was the dangerous moment—the jam must not be allowed to break up too quickly. That towering

mass of timber must not descend with a sudden rush.

For two hours the work went on. Sometimes Tooska stood leaning his weight against a section of logs, to hold them and prevent them breaking away. The piled-up water was gushing through now, and at times Tooska's great head was almost submerged

Slowly, with the aid of Tooska's skill, the task was completed The logs, freed, began to rush down river !

The guard levelled his rifle at Chalu. "You cannot escape, boy !" he rasped, completely unaware that an elephant had shuffled silently up behind him. Chalu's mighty four-footed pal had come to his master's rescue !

Chalu guided Tooska out of the water and on to the bank. Then he slipped down the wet flanks of Tooska, and stood facing Carter Sahib, who stood with the strange white man.

"This boy and his elephant saved the day for you, Carter !" cried John Farwell, beaming at Chalu. "Who is he ? Where did he come from ?"

"He's Chalu, sir," returned Carter, wiping the sweat from his forehead with a bare forearm. "And this is the elephant that turned rogue !"

"No ! No, Carter Sahib !" said Chalu fiercely. "It is not true ! I know that it is not true, now ! I came to find you, because there is much that I must tell you. I was going to leave Tooska in the jungle, so that he would be safe from you if you did not believe me—but when I saw that you were in much trouble, I brought Tooska to help !"

"I'd like to believe you, Chalu," Carter said wearily, "but —"

'Let the boy tell his story," broke in Farwell. "After what I've seen in the last couple of hours, I certainly wouldn't like that elephant shot !"

Chalu began to speak, and as he went on he saw looks of blank amazement on the faces of the two white men. He told them everything that had happened, all that he had heard and seen at the camp of the rival timber company.

"Does he mean that Markham is behind all this ?" gasped Farwell. "But that's impossible !"

Carter fingered his chin, a thoughtful look in his eyes.

"It's a curious thing we've been striking all sorts of trouble recently," he muttered. "Almost as if somebody has been trying to wreck our work."

He turned to Chalu.

"Can you prove anything, Chalu ?" he asked.

Chalu began to shake his head slowly—and then a sudden idea flashed into his mind.

"There are two things, Carter Sahib !" he exclaimed. "First there is—this !" He lifted his right foot, to show the padded circlet round his ankle. "That is how they chained me up, sahib ! And there is another thing—that tonight Mura Tal will make his elephant look like Tooska, and attack the Tukari village !"

John Farwell was staring at Chalu's ankle.

"We'll see !" he said in a quiet voice. "I didn't tell you this before, Carter, but my company has recently bought up the timber company which Markham manages. We intend to bring the two companies under one manager, and it was to be a

choice between you and Markham. I flew out here to make a decision on the spot as to which of you should get the job. If Markham has managed to learn the purpose of my visit, it's possible that he's been deliberately causing trouble for you! We must get to the bottom of this!"

THE BATTLE OF GIANTS!

NIGHT had fallen. In the thick foliage surrounding the Tukari village, three figures crouched in hiding Chalu, Carter Sahib and Farwell Sahib were awaiting the coming of Kundra-Ga Steve Carter's elephant gun rested in the crook of his arm. Behind them, a black shadow in the gloom, loomed Tooska

Suddenly Tooska's trunk curled out and moved softly over Chalu's shoulder. Then the elephant turned and began to drift through the trees as silently as a pall of smoke

"Come!" Chalu breathed to his companions "Tooska has caught the scent of Kundra Ga!"

Turning, the Indian boy began to steal after the great animal. For two hundred yards the three moved on, and then Chalu halted them at a point where the jungle gave way to a broad glade, dappled with moonlight. The glade was empty, and there was now no sign of Tooska.

"Wait!" whispered Chalu.

For long minutes they crouched, eyes straining across the glade. Then suddenly a great form was outlined against the moonlight.

"It is Tooska!" muttered Carter.

"Nay, sahib!" breathed Chalu. "It is Kundra-Ga! His master, Mura Tal, will be nearby. He has sent Kundra-Ga to do his evil work!"

Kundra-Ga, the painted black mark showing clearly on his flank, stood for a moment at the far end of the glade. Then he lifted his trunk and sent forth a shrill, furious trumpeting sound. Ponderously at first, then with growing speed, he began to thunder down the length of the glade, heading towards the village which lay only a few hundred paces away through the jungle.

Steve Carter watched the on-coming animal, then raised his gun to his shoulder. But Chalu's hand pushed the barrel down.

"Nay, sahib!" he said quietly. "Tooska will take his revenge on the imposter."

Even as the elephant boy spoke, there came another fierce and terrifying sound of trumpeting; but this time to their right. John Farwell's eyes widened as he saw a second vast shape emerge from the edge of the clearing It was Tooska, moving like the wind!

There came a thud, like the sound of a tree falling in a swamp, as Tooska's lowered head took Kundra-Ga full in the side. Kundra Ga hurtled sideways, squealing with fury, then climbed slowly to his feet.

For a moment the two great animals stood facing each other, trumpeting their shrill challenge; then they clashed in terrible battle. Up and down the clearing the fight swayed, for Kundra-Ga, like Tooska himself, was a seasoned fighter.

With tusk and head they battered and lunged There was red on Tooska's flank now, and Steve Carter again lifted his gun to fire at Kundra Ga

"Nay, sahib!" said Chalu quickly. "It is nothing—a little gash. Watch Tooska, sahib! Watch him when he seems to falter and goes to his knees!"

The two white men gazed with every nerve taut as the battle of giants went on. Suddenly Tooska seemed to weaken, crumpling to his knees. With a squeal of triumph Kundra Ga charged.

What happened next came so swiftly that neither of the white men saw exactly how it came about. Tooska seemed to lurch forward. His tusks came up under Kundra-Ga, and the mighty beast that was half rogue was heaved clean over Tooska's back!

Swift as a cat for all his size, Tooska was upon his fallen enemy.

Kundra Ga, bewildered and shaken, was buffeted from side to side of the clearing. Abruptly he turned to flee!

"Tooska has had his revenge, sahib," murmured Chalu. "Now use the bullet on Kundra Ga. It is the kindest way, for he is already half-rogue, and in time he would take to the jungle for always, and do much damage."

Steve Carter nodded, raised his rifle, and fired Kundra-Ga fell in a crumpled heap.

By the time Tooska returned to the encampment of the teak company, it was dawn. On his back were Chalu, Steve Carter and John Farwell. The white men were serious-looking, but Chalu was crooning a little song of triumph.

"Aieee! The great Tooska! The Wise One, mightiest of his tribe! Tooska, conqueror of Kundra Ga!"

Chalu was very happy!

Farwell turned to Carter.

"You can leave Markham and this fellow Mura Tal to me, Carter," he said grimly. "I'll see they get what they deserve for their trickery. And as for the managership of the two territories, well, I can see that you're the man for the job."

"Thank you, sir," Carter said quietly. "I think young Chalu here should be rewarded for what he's done Can I attend to that?"

"With the greatest pleasure!" nodded Farwell, smiling. "I only wish we could reward Tooska, too!"

Chalu turned, a wide smile on his face.

"I will bring Tooska such a feast of the tenderest bamboo shoots, sahib," he said, "that the Big One will want nothing but to lie in the sun and sleep. And I will tell all the mahouts what he has done, and even the elephants themselves will know, for they understand many things, sahib!"

Chalu turned and patted the tough hide of Tooska's back.

"Ha!" he cried. "You are a king of beasts, Big One! No longer will the natives of the villages say that this is the mark of the rogue!"

And Chalu patted the black patch across Tooska's flank, while the elephant lifted his trunk and trumpeted as if in honour of his own victory!

PERIL ON THE TOMAHAWK TRAIL

BY REX KING

IN THE TOMAHAWK RIVER TERRITORY OF TEXAS THERE HAD BEEN A TENSE, UNEASY PEACE FOR MONTHS THE WARLIKE PAWNEE TRIBE WAS LYING LOW, AWAITING ITS CHANCE TO STRIKE. AND IN THE STRING OF U.S. ARMY FORTS ALONG THE RIVER BANK, THE GARRISONS WERE CONSTANTLY ON THE ALERT. THEN, AT NOON ON A BRIGHT SUMMER'S DAY, A DUST-COVERED RIDER GALLOPED FURIOUSLY INTO ARMY HEADQUARTERS

IT'S THAT HALF BREED, FRENCHY LATOUR! HEY! WHAT'S THE HURRY, FRENCHY?

ZE PAWNEES! ZEY ARE ON ZE WARPATH!

LEADING FROM THE SADDLE, THE HALF-BREED RACED UP THE STEPS OF THE COLONEL'S OFFICE

I MUST SEE ZE COLONEL, URGENT!

GO RIGHT AHEAD! HE'S INSIDE

FRENCHY LATOUR BURST IN ON THE COLONEL

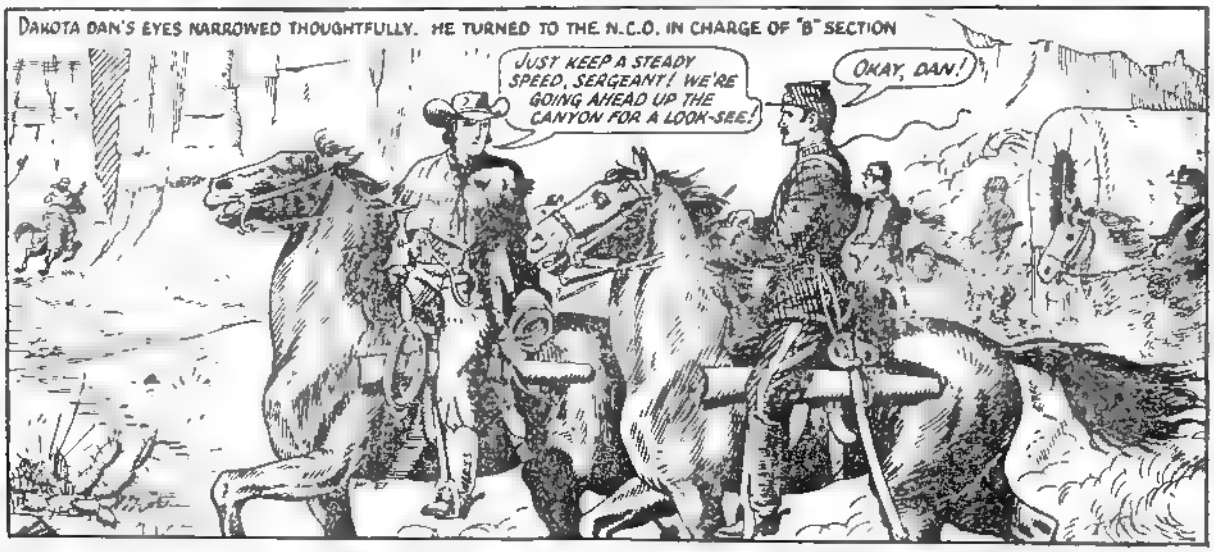
ZE PAWNEES ARE ATTACKING FORT GRANT! AND ZE SOLDIERS ZERE --ZEY ARE RUNNING OUT OF AMMUNITION AND CANNOT HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER. I 'AVE RIDDEN HERE TO FETCH HELP

GOOD HEAVENS! IF THE INDIANS CAPTURE FORT GRANT, OUR WHOLE STRING OF FORTS WILL BE LOST. I'LL GET DAKOTA DAN HERE AT ONCE!

DAKOTA DAN WAS THE COLONEL'S CHIEF SCOUT. HE SOON ARRIVED AND HEARD THE NEWS
--I'M SENDING B SECTION WITH A WAGON-LOAD OF AMMUNITION TO THE FORT. I WANT YOU TO ACT AS SCOUT. THIS MAN LATOUR WILL RIDE WITH YOU
VERY GOOD, COLONEL. WE'LL GET THAT AMMUNITION THROUGH SOMEHOW!

THE COLONEL'S TRUMPETER SOUNDED THE "FALL IN!" THEN, TO THE JINGLE OF HARNESS, THE AMMUNITION WAGON ROLLED OUT THROUGH THE GATEWAY, WITH ITS CAVALRY ESCORT GALLOPING ALONGSIDE. DAKOTA DAN LED THE WAY WITH THE HALF-BREED

THE SMALL BAND HAD TRAVELLED ONLY A FEW MILES WHEN LATOUR SUDDENLY SPURRED HIS HORSE FORWARD
THUNDER CANYON WILL BE OUR BEST ROUTE. IT EES CLEAR OF REDSKINS. I WILL RIDE AHEAD AND SCOUT OUT ZE LAND. LEAVE EET TO ME!
THANKS FOR THE OFFER, FRENCHY, BUT I'M COMING WITH YOU


DAKOTA DAN'S EYES NARROWED THOUGHTFULLY. HE TURNED TO THE N.C.O. IN CHARGE OF "B" SECTION
JUST KEEP A STEADY SPEED, SERGEANT! WE'RE GOING AHEAD UP THE CANYON FOR A LOOK-SEE!
OKAY, DAN!

DISMOUNTING, DAN STUDIED THE GROUND
HOOFMARKS! AND MADE BY INDIAN PONIES, TOO! I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THIS
YOU WASTE TIME! ZEY MAY BE OLD MARKS! I TELL YOU ZERE ARE NO REDSKINS ROUND HERE---

SUDDENLY, THINKING THAT DAKOTA DAN WASN'T LOOKING AT HIM, LATOUR KICKED AT A PILE OF STONES ALONGSIDE THE TRAIL. DAN TURNED LIKE A FLASH
WHY, 'TIS TREAL HEROS LATT. I SWARE! THAT'S AN INDIAN SIGN TO YE! JUST KICKED DOWN A MESSAGE FOR YE FROM THE PAWNEES. 'GUESTS' YOU ARE - LAYING US INTO A TRAP!
LATOUR WHIPPED OUT HIS GUN
YOU KNOW TOO MUCH, MSIEU! TOO MUCH TO LIVE ..
SO THAT'S THE WAY IT IS!
DAN HAD TO ACT FAST. AS THE HALF-BREED'S GUN ROARED, HE FLUNG HIMSELF FLAT TO THE GROUND AND DREW HIS OWN SIX-SHOOTER
YOU'RE NOT SAFE WITH A GUN, FRENCHY. RECKON I'LL RID YOU OF IT!
BUT DAN'S SUCCESS WAS SHORT-LIVED. FOR A PAINTED REDSKIN WITH WAR-CLUB UPRAISED, LEAPT FROM THE BUSHES BORDERING A RAVINE
THAT FOR YOU, O DOG OF A PALEFACE!
WELL DONE, RED WING! KILL HIM BEFORE THE PALEFACE SOLDIERS COME NEAR!
SWINGING DAN ALOFT, RED WING HURLED HIM OVER THE EDGE OF THE RAVINE
DIE, PALEFACE DOG!
DOWN RED WING! HERE COME LE SOLDIERS — RIGHT INTO OUR TRAP!

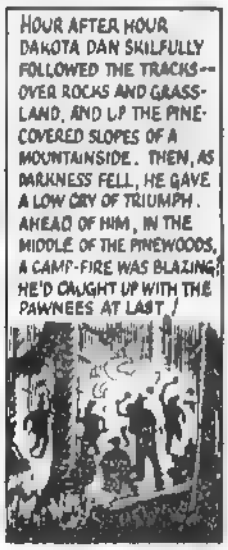
SPINNING THROUGH SPACE, DAN MADE A DESPERATE GRAB AT A BUSH WHICH GREW FROM THE CLIFF-FACE. HIS HANDS GOT A HOLD. GRIMLY HE HUNG ON STILL DAZED FROM RED WING'S COWARDLY ATTACK
HUH! THOSE SNAKES THINK THEY'VE GOT ME OUTA THE WAY. BUT I'LL SOON SHOW 'EM
MEANWHILE ON THE CLIFF TOP ——
SEE -- ZE PALEFACE SOLDIERS APPROACH. THEY RIDE INTO OUR TRAP, RED WING WHEN WE HAVE DEALT WITH THEM, WE WILL PUT OUR SECRET PLAN INTO OPERATION, AND ZE PAWNEES CAN TAKE ZE WARPATH
HEAP GOOD BY TO-MORROW NIGHT, ALL PALE-FACE FORTS ON TOMAHAWK RIVER WILL BE IN OUR HANDS
DAKOTA DAN HEARD THE PLOTTERS' WORDS AS HE SLOWLY WORKED HIS WAY UP THE SLIPPERY CLIFF-FACE. SO THE PAWNEES WERE NOT YET ON THE WAR-PATH, AND FORT GRANT WAS NOT BEING ATTACKED! BUT WHY HAD LATOUR PLOTTED TO LURE THE AMMUNITION WAGON AND ITS ESCORT INTO A TRAP? WHAT WAS THE SCHEMING HALF BREED'S PLAN TO CAPTURE FORT GRANT?
SECTION 8 HAVE GOTTA BE STOPPED FROM RIDIN' INTO THAT REDSKIN AMBUSH JUMPING COYOTES, THERE'S A TOUGH CLIMB AHEAD OF ME. I HOPE I CAN WARN THE TROOPERS IN TIME
BUT EVEN AT THAT MOMENT, THE AMMUNITION WAGON AND ITS ESCORT RODE INTO THUNDER CANYON!
NO SIGN OF THE SCOUTS, MEN! I GUESS THE WAY MUST BE CLEAR---
WITH BLOOD CURDLING WAR CRIES, A HORDE OF PAINTED PAWNEES AT ONCE BROKE FROM COVER!
STRIKE NOW! FOLLOW ME, MY BRAVES!
BY HONEY, IT'S A TRAP! WE'RE OUTNUMBERED!
HEROICALLY THE SMALL BAND OF TROOPERS FOUGHT BACK
WE'RE DONE FOR! BUT WE'LL SHOW THE RED POLECATS! LET 'EM HAVE IT, MEN!
TAKE THAT, YOU DOGS!

STILL BATTLING HIS WAY TO THE CLIFF-TOP, DAKOTA DAN GROANED AS HE HEARD THE RIFLE SHOTS AND THE YELLS OF THE REDSKINS
TOO LATE, BY THUNDER! SECTION B'S RUN RIGHT INTO A DEATH-TRAP! BUT I'LL AVENGE THEM! THAT TREACHEROUS HALF-BREED, LATOUR, WILL PAY FOR THIS!

BY THE TIME DAN CLAMBERED OVER THE BRINK, ALL HAD GONE QUIET. AND THEN HE GASPED IN AMAZEMENT
RATTLING RATTLESNAKES! THE CANYON'S EMPTY! AND NO SIGN OF ANY BODIES, EITHER. THE REDSKINS MUST'VE TAKEN THE TROOPERS ALIVE!

I'VE GOT TO RESCUE OUR MEN FROM THOSE PAWNEE DEVILS--AND SOMEHOW GET THE LOW-DOWN ON LATOUR'S PLAN TO CAPTURE FORT GRANT.

SWIFTLY DAN SET OFF ON FOOT ALONG THE CANYON, PICKING OUT THE TRAIL LEFT BY THE REDSKINS
THEY'RE MOUNTED, AND THEY'VE GOT A START ON ME! IF I DON'T MOVE FAST, I MAY BE TOO LATE!

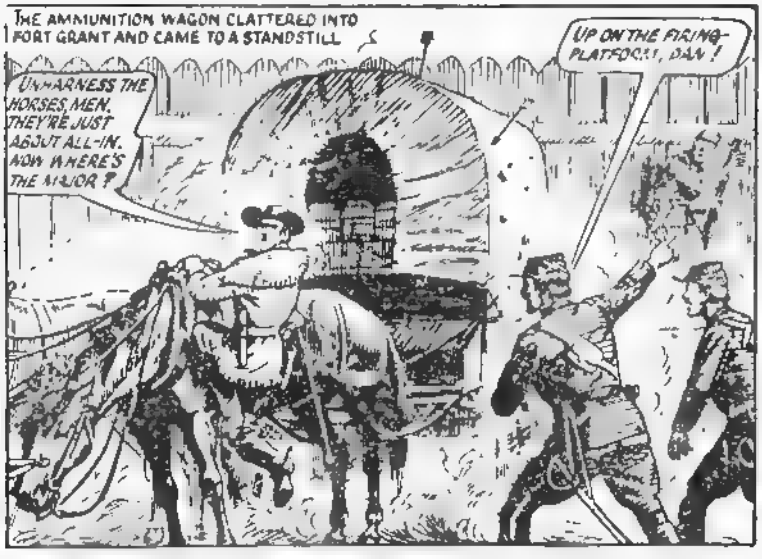

HOUR AFTER HOUR DAKOTA DAN SKILFULLY FOLLOWED THE TRACKS--OVER ROCKS AND GRASS-LAND, AND UP THE PINE-COVERED SLOPES OF A MOUNTAINSIDE. THEN, AS DARKNESS FELL, HE GAVE A LOW CRY OF TRIUMPH. AHEAD OF HIM, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PINEWOODS, A CAMP-FIRE WAS BLAZING. HE'D CAUGHT UP WITH THE PAWNEES AT LAST!

AS SILENT AS A SHADOW THE FEARLESS SCOUT CREPT TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE HUGE CLEARING. THERE HE STOPPED, HIS EYES GLEAMING
OUR TROOPERS--TIED TO STAKES! AND THE PAWNEES ARE DOING THE WAR DANCE ROUND 'EM! LOOKS LIKE I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME. BUT WHAT THE HECK CAN I DO? I NEED A PLAN--AND FAST!

SUDDENLY A TALL CHIEFTAIN LEAPT INTO THE CENTRE OF THE CIRCLE OF WILDLY DANCING REDSKINS, YELLING TO THE GODS OF HIS TRIBE
O MIGHTY SPIRITS, ACCEPT THESE SACRIFICES! GIVE US VICTORY IN OUR COMING BATTLE AGAINST THE ACCURSED PALEFACES

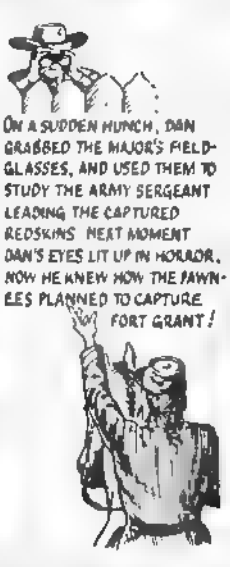
NING. HE HAD BUT A FEW SECONDS TO SAVE HIS COMRADES FROM DEATH! AS A SUDDEN IDEA CAME TO HIM, THE ACE SCOUT FROM SOME AMMUNITION AND HEAPED IT ON THE GROUND
IF THIS TRICK DOESN'T WORK, THEN I RECKON I'LL BE JOINING THOSE TROOPERS IN THE SACRIFICE
DAN THEN SPRANG INTO ACTION, KNIFE IN HAND HE RACED ACROSS THE CLEARING
SCATTER INTO THE WOODS, LADS. I'LL KEEP THE PAWNEES TOO BUSY TO CHASE YOU. MAKE YOUR OWN WAY BACK TO ARMY HEADQUARTERS

AS THE RESCUED TROOPERS VANISHED INTO THE DARKNESS, FRENCHY LATOUR APPEARED ON THE SCENE. YELLING WITH RAGE, HE RALLIED THE COWERING REDSKINS
EET IS NO SPIRIT, FOOLS! SEE! DAKOTA DAN HAS TRICKED YOU! SEIZE HIM! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE THIS TIME
THE HALF-BREED BLAZED AWAY AT THE ESCAPING DAN AS THE REDSKINS SURGED FORWARD AGAIN
They're close to me. I must get to the wagon. It's my only chance!
FOLLOWED BY A HAIL OF ARROWS, THE FAMOUS SCOUT LEAPT ON TO ONE OF THE HORSES AND WHIPPED UP THE TEAM
Made it! Now for Fort Grant! Away you go, my beauties!
The paleface escapes!
FURIOUS AT DAN'S GETAWAY, LATOUR RAPPED OUT ORDERS
Ze time has come! We must put ze secret plan into operation at once!
Vow to overthrow the paleface dogs in Fort Grant
AT A RECKLESS SPEED DAN HURTLED THROUGH THE NIGHT, RISKING DEATH AT EVERY BEND IN THE TRAIL
Ki-yi, you critters! It's Fort Grant— or bust!
AS THE SUN ROSE---
Fort Grant—at last! But Latour and those red pals of his must be close on my heels, and I still don't know how they plan to capture the fort

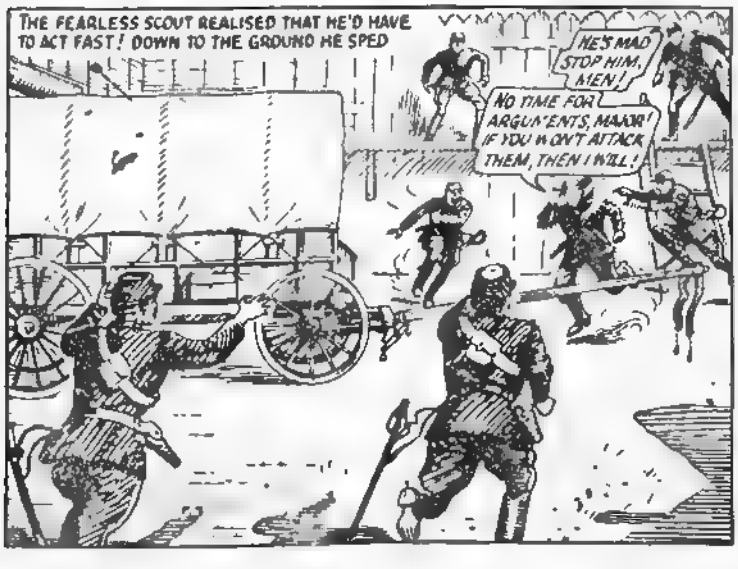

THE AMMUNITION WAGON CLATTERED INTO FORT GRANT AND CAME TO A STANDSTILL
UNHARNESS THE HORSES, MEN. THEY'RE JUST ABOUT ALL-IN. NOW WHERE'S THE MAJOR?
UP ON THE FIRING-PLATFORM, DAN!

WITHIN SECONDS DAN WAS REPORTING TO THE OFFICER IN CHARGE AT THE FORT
STAND TO, MAJOR! THE PAWNEES ARE ON THE WARPATH! THEY'LL BE HERE ANY SECOND!
THANKS FOR THE WARNING, DAN. WE'LL BE READY TO GIVE 'EM A HOT RECEPTION

DAN REACHED THE FIRING-PLATFORM, LOOKED OUT OVER THE VALLEY -- AND RECEIVED A SHOCK
WHY, THERE'S THE WHOLE TRIBE -- CAPTURED BY TROOPERS! BUT -- BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND
SEEMS LIKE SOME OF OUR MEN HAVE GOT THE PAWNEES NICELY UNDER CONTROL, DAN


ON A SUDDEN HUNCH, DAN GRABBED THE MAJOR'S FIELD-GLASSES, AND USED THEM TO STUDY THE ARMY SERGEANT LEADING THE CAPTURED REDSKINS. NEXT MOMENT DAN'S EYES LIT UP IN HORROR. NOW HE KNEW HOW THE PAWNEES PLANNED TO CAPTURE FORT GRANT!

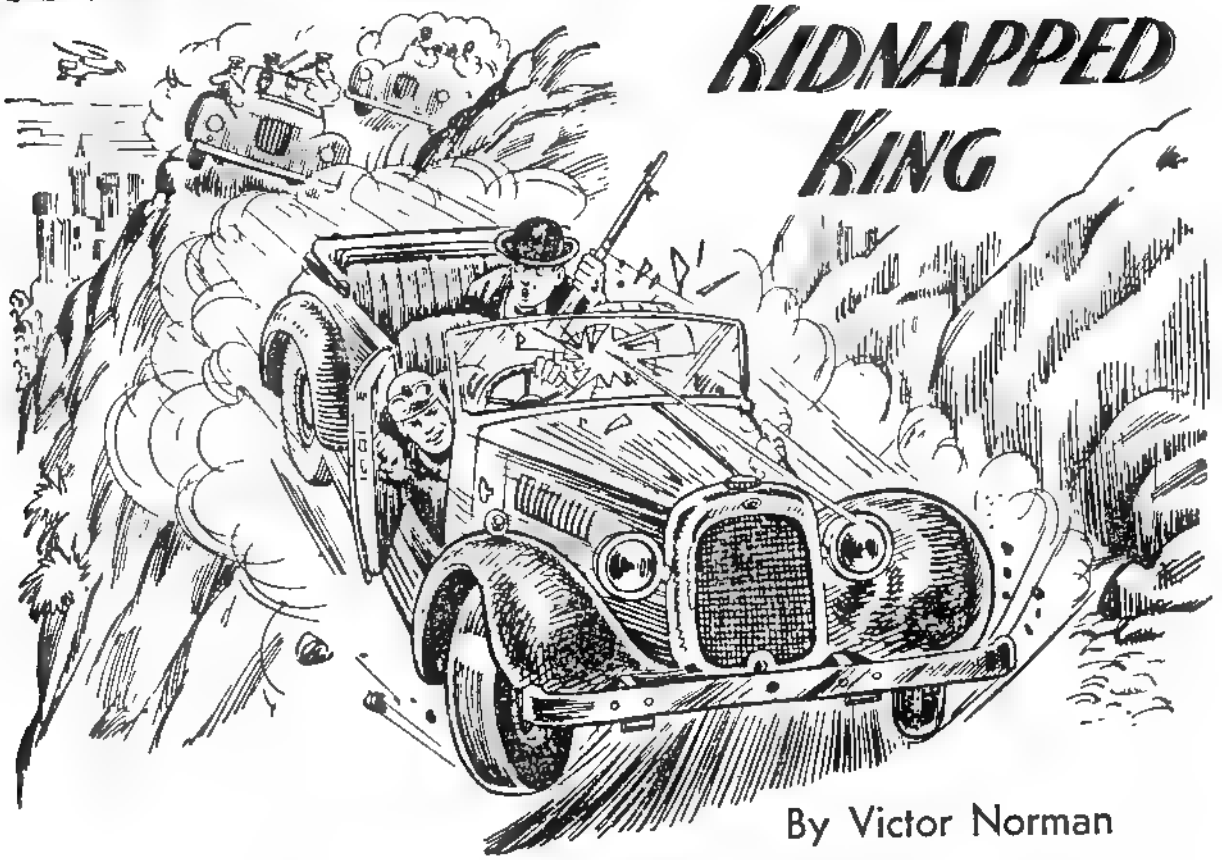
IT'S A TRAP! OPEN FIRE, MAJOR! THERE'S NOT A SECOND TO LOSE!
WHAT! OPEN FIRE ON OUR OWN MEN BRINGING IN PRISONERS? YOU MUST BE CRAZY!


THE FEARLESS SCOUT REALISED THAT HE'D HAVE TO ACT FAST! DOWN TO THE GROUND HE SPED
HE'S MAD! STOP HIM, MEN!
NO TIME FOR ARGUMENTS, MAJOR! IF YOU WON'T ATTACK THEM, THEN I WILL!

THERE WAS NO STOPPING DAKOTA DAN. AFTER LIGHTING A TORCH, HE MAN-HANDLED THE AMMUNITION WAGON OUT OF THE FORT, AND SENT IT RUNNING DOWN THE SLOPE
SHE'S ROLLING! NOW TO STOP THOSE PAWNEES!

JUMPING ON TO THE EXPLOSIVE FILLED WAGON, DAN SET FIRE TO ITS CANVAS COVER
SHARE THIS BETWEEN YOU, YOU RED SKUNKS!
DAN LEAPT CLEAR, AND A FEW SECONDS LATER THE WAGON HIT A BOULDER NEAR THE ADVANCING HORSEMEN. INSTANTLY--
THE EXPLOSION CREATED GREAT HAVOC. IT ALSO BLEW OFF THE SOLDIERS' CAPS, REVEALING THAT THEY WERE NOT REAL SOLDIERS AT ALL -- BUT REDSKINS WHO HAD BEEN DISGUISED!
NAME OF A NAME, WE ARE DISCOVERED!
AIEE! PALEFACE THUNDER HEAP POWERFUL!
FLEE, MY BROTHERS!
THE MAJOR COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EYES!
BY HOKEY, THOSE TROOPERS ARE REALLY INJUNS! IT'S ALL A PAWNEE TRICK! TO YOUR HORSES, MEN!
THE REDSKINS WERE TOO DAZED BY THE EXPLOSION TO FIGHT! THOROUGHLY COWED, THEY ALL SURRENDERED
MARCH THE TREACHEROUS DOGS TO THE FORT!
DAKOTA DAN MADE IT HIS BUSINESS TO CAPTURE FRENCHY LATOUR, THE RENEGADE HALF-BREED, AND TAKE HIM BEFORE THE MAJOR. DAN THEN EXPLAINED ABOUT THE TRICK THE PAWNEES HAD ATTEMPTED
LATOUR LED OUR MEN FROM HEADQUARTERS SO HIS REDSKINS COULD CAPTURE THE REINFORCEMENTS! I ONLY TUMBLED TO THE REDSKINS' GAME JUST NOW WHEN I RECOGNISED THIS SKUNK IN THE SERGEANT'S TUNIC. IF THE PAWNEES HAD GOT INTO THE FORT, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ALL UP WITH US!
I GUESS THIS PUTS PAID TO THE REDSKIN UPRISING -- THANKS TO YOU. YOU'VE CERTAINLY DONE A MIGHTY FINE JOB, DAKOTA DAN!

WIZ and LOFTY—RESCUERS of the KIDNAPPED KING



By Victor Norman

WIZ'S "AIR LIFT"

LOFTY DUFF was angry By a matter of minutes he had lost what might well have proved to be one of the most well-paid jobs the firm of "Hardy and Duff Speed-Specialists" had ever been offered

And the job had been lost just because Lofty's speed-crazy partner, Wiz Hardy, was away testing a helicopter, trying to land it on a rock in the middle of a raging river.

In Wiz's absence, a large, chauffeur driven car had swept up to Lofty's office on the perimeter of the disused airfield that the two pals used for testing any new land or air speed machine.

The man who had stepped from the car had been excited. His skin was dark, he wore flashing jewellery on his fingers, and had the appearance of being an official from a state in the Far East.

Hastily adjusting his glasses, Lofty, dressed in a dark pin-striped suit, rushed to meet the man. The newcomer had been delighted to meet Lofty, who handled the business side of the speed specialist firm, but was dismayed at finding that Wiz, who did the actual speed testing, was not on hand.

He explained about a job which he wanted Wiz to execute for him. But then, on learning that Wiz might not be back for over an hour, he had dashed away, saying he would find someone else for the job.

All Lofty had been able to get from the man was that he wanted some important package collected from somewhere in a remote foreign country, and then delivered to another part of the same country, even more remote. It was a job for a helicopter; and at helicoptering Wiz was a wizard.

Hardly had the car gone from the airfield than Lofty heard the sound of Wiz's helicopter engine.

"Wiz!" he yelled excitedly.

Waving his arms, the lanky Lofty dashed up and down, signalling to his flying pal.

Wiz Hardy lowered the helicopter to just above Lofty's head, and then looked through the hatch on the underside of the fuselage.

"What's biting you, Lofty?" he asked

In a few yelled words Lofty explained about the dark-skinned man who had called.

"O K I'll lower the ladder, and you can come up" cried Wiz "Then we'll go after him."

Lofty soon climbed the ladder and slipped into the cabin beside his pal.

Making the helicopter climb, Wiz surveyed the main road that ran near the airfield. Within a few seconds he had picked out the chauffeur driven car.

It Was Speed That Counted When They Butted Into a Revolution!

" Perch yourself on the ladder, Lofty," he said. " I'll take you down to the car, and you can talk business "

Lofty didn't like the idea much, but he went down the ladder as Wiz overhauled the car. Wiz then throttled back, and flew at the same speed as the car

Hanging from the ladder, Lofty rapped the car's sunshine roof.

Suddenly, the roof was flung open, and Lofty looked down into the startled face of the dark-skinned man who had called on him.

" As I was saying," Lofty resumed. " We shall be delighted to take on this job if we can have full particulars. "

The man was too overcome to think clearly for a moment.

" We—we cannot speak like this," he said. " Come inside, please."

" Better you come up with us," said Lofty. " You've got a chauffeur—we've got no one to fly the helicopter if Wiz leaves the controls. I'll give you a hand."

The amazed chauffeur held his speed steady, while his passenger stepped on to the car's seat, and then on to the ladder.

A minute later, perspiring freely, the man was inside the helicopter.

" We could both have stopped," grinned Wiz, " but it would have wasted time ; and I thought this would demonstrate the possibilities of the helicopter. They're good for almost any job—chimneys swept—rings dropped on gold watches at hoop-la stalls—fruit picked from tall trees."

" Ah ! That brings me to business," said the passenger briskly. " This wonderful exploit has convinced me. You can save the King— "

Wiz looked at Lofty, whose eyebrows shot up.

" King ? " cried Wiz. " What King ? "

" Well -I will be frank," went on the passenger, " but I must compel you to the utmost secrecy. How fortunate that we are aloft and alone ! Now here are the essential facts. I am an ambassador from Zarabia, in the East. Our King is in danger from an evil man who plans to seize power At present, the King is safe in his palace, but he is surrounded by the evil man's army and cannot escape from it—except, by air ! "

" You mean," gasped Wiz. " He is waiting for a helicopter ? "

" Yes. That is just it. Only a helicopter can save him. By other means escape is impossible. But you must go swiftly—at once to Zarabia. I will give you all directions. And when he is rescued, you will take him to a secret address I will give you."

In a moment, secret documents were spread out in the helicopter, and Wiz, to give himself better chance of studying them, returned with his passenger to the airfield.

" But, understand," warned the ambassador, when all instructions had been given, " the reward I offer you is high largely because your personal safety cannot be guaranteed."

" My personal safety guarantee ran out years ago," Wiz told him, with a wry grin.

" And, anyway," added Lofty, frowning, " we're neutrals, not taking sides, merely foreigners doing a job "

" Ah ! That is so," nodded the ambassador.

Wiz said nothing. They had a long flight before them, and flight plans had to be made. The young speed-merchant could see hectic times ahead !

IN A TOUGH SPOT

WIZ HARDY looked down from his helicopter at the jagged, snowcapped mountain peaks of Zarabia, and whistled softly. At last he had arrived at his destination in the East, and any place less pleasing or promising for flying he had never known.

Lofty Duff looked down even more gloomily. His enthusiasm for this job had been waning steadily ever since they had taken it on, and even though a terrifically high fee had been paid, he was less than ever convinced that in the end he and Wiz would live to enjoy it.

" There's the Royal city," he said suddenly, pointing ahead to a plateau well below the highest mountain ranges.

Wiz had already seen it, and was searching for the palace in which the Zarabian King was trapped.

" There it is ! " he cried suddenly.

The imposing building, with its stately pillars, and classical architecture, stood out plainly. Much of it had been hacked from solid rock, and surmounting it was a flat, turreted roof. That roof was where the King, according to plan, was now waiting to be rescued.

In front of the palace, in a vast courtyard, a parade was in progress. Infantrymen in brilliant uniforms marched in line ; a troop of cavalry pranced at one end, their riders gaily plumed, and with purple cloaks flying. These, Wiz and Lofty agreed, were the troops laying siege to the King in his palace.

" Any anti-aircraft guns ? " asked Wiz. " I'm not worried by the flashing bayonets, but ack-ack wants watching."

Wiz made a circuit of the palace roof. There was no sign of a small body of men defending it ; nor, as he had hoped to see, was there any sign of the King.

In fact, apart from a few men who were looking at the parade below, the roof was empty.

" There's an anti-aircraft gun down there," said Lofty sharply. " Its crew are manning it, but they don't seem to be at all interested in us."

Some of the soldiers looked up ; almost all the officers did. But no order to fire was given.

This puzzled Wiz. He had supposed that those who were keeping the King imprisoned in his palace would guess that the helicopter had been sent to rescue him. So why hadn't the helicopter come under fire ?

" Very pleasant," smiled Lofty. " They haven't come to yet—the penny hasn't dropped. Make for the roof, Wiz ! We may be able to whisk the King off with no trouble at all."

Wiz went to the roof, and as he hovered over it,

he saw a small door at the end -at the top of a staircase.

The door was suddenly flung open, and a man in a magnificent cavalry cloak strode through, followed by two other officers, and a few soldiers.

He held up his hand, signalling to the helicopter, and then pointed to the centre of the roof, indicating that he wanted Wiz to touch down.

Wiz landed, and then, shutting off the engine, climbed out. "You know my mission?" Wiz asked the leading officer

"I do. You have come to collect His Majesty, the King."

"I have," agreed Wiz.

"I," said the officer, holding out his hand, "am Colonel Strandt. Your safety depends entirely on you obeying all my orders."

There was a glint in his eye, and a hidden meaning in his words.

"I see," said Wiz slowly. "In fact, apart from the King himself I should think you are the big shot here"

"Including the King himself," said Colonel Strandt with a grim smile. "He now takes his orders from me"

Then as Wiz gave a soft, dismayed whistle, the Colonel turned and barked a command to his men.

Instantly, three men hurried from the doorway and on to the roof! The middle man of the three was bound and gagged.

"The King!" said Colonel Strandt in mocking tone. "He is my prisoner. You have come to collect him and you shall But you will take him to a different place from the one marked in your order. You will take him where I tell you."

Wiz glanced sideways at Lofty, whose face was now pale and strained. Lofty looked back at him, and then at Colonel Strandt's right hand.

The evil-looking soldier's hand had just come into view from under his cloak, and in it was a powerful automatic pistol, directed at them.

"You will take me and the King away in your helicopter—or I will shoot!" he rasped

Wiz folded his arms grimly, and shook his head.

"My job is to deliver the King into the hands of his loyal supporters at a certain place. That's my contract, and that's what I mean to do."

The Colonel took a step forward, and then viciously fired a bullet, which whistled past Wiz's head.

"You'll do as I say. Get back into that helicopter," he raged. "I'm a desperate man. Take heed."

Lofty nudged his pal.

"Better do it, Wiz," he muttered.

But Wiz remained steady, his arms folded defiantly.

Colonel Strandt, amazed and angry, levelled the automatic at him, with such glittering venom in his eyes that Lofty expected to see Wiz fall to the sound of a fatal pistol shot!

Wiz was in the toughest spot of his life!

THEY FLEW ON A LADDER!

NO one could have cared less about foreign politics than Wiz Hardy. But his sole concern at the moment was to carry out his own flying job. And his job was to collect the King of Zarabia, and convey him to a certain destination.

He had no intention of not carrying out his mission.

Lofty held much the same views, but he lacked Wiz's nerve.

"You will take me and the King away in your helicopter——or I will shoot!" rasped Colonel Strandt. But Wiz defiantly refused to budge, although he was in the tightest spot of his career!

While Wiz stood his ground, the two men in charge of the struggling King hurried him into the helicopter. That done, they called out anxiously to Colonel Strandt!

"The King's supporters are rallying. They are already climbing the stairs, despite the machine-guns!"

Wiz gasped. So it was the King's men, not the Colonel's, who were besieging the palace!

Colonel Strandt backed towards the aircraft, as most of his men rushed from the roof. He still kept Wiz covered with the pistol.

"For the last time—will you fly this helicopter to my orders?"

"No," rapped Wiz.

"No? Then, if that is your final answer, you have sealed your own fate. I have a shock for you," said Colonel Strandt "I am myself a helicopter pilot!"

He had reached the helicopter cabin, and paused there, still covering Wiz with the pistol.

" Gosh ! " gasped Lofty, quaking. " He's got us beaten. He'll kill us, and take the helicopter ! "

Colonel Strandt rapped orders to the two men who had escorted the King into the helicopter. He pointed to Wiz and Lofty.

" Fling them from the roof," he ordered. " It can be made to seem a tragic accident— "

He climbed into the cabin, and revved the engine.

While the Colonel set the helicopter's motors revolving, the two heavily-built, cloaked soldiers who had deserted the King to join the Colonel's rebel force, strode menacingly towards Wiz and Lofty.

" We're unarmed. It's hopeless," muttered Lofty.

" Not if we use our wits. Notice their cloaks, how they fly out behind them," said Wiz, his eyes glinting. " We're going to use those cloaks. Back with me—down to the tail of the aircraft. When they follow, you dash forward, and pretend to have something like a hand-grenade to throw into the aircraft."

Lofty did not fully grasp what Wiz's plan was, but experience had told him that Wiz's plans usually worked out—somehow.

Suddenly, having backed towards the tail of the aircraft, Lofty darted forward as Wiz had suggested. He threw up his right hand.

" Get out, Colonel, or I blow it to bits ! " he yelled.

Both soldiers turned to grab him.

Wiz sprang. Grabbing the tails of their flapping cloaks, he heaved.

Tripping and stumbling, the two men were dragged backwards !

" Lofty, take one," Wiz yelled.

Lofty rushed back, and took one of the cloaks from Wiz, and heaved at it.

Wiz gave a sudden jerk that flung his man off his feet, then he rushed back and wound the cloak round the man and tied it tightly.

He next ran to help Lofty.

Both the Colonel's men were soon rolling across the roof, striving in vain to get free.

Wiz rushed to the helicopter, and Lofty followed.

" The Colonel will recognise us when we climb up," gasped Lofty, as Wiz craftily unhitched the rope ladder beneath the helicopter.

But, while the Colonel was busy at the controls, Wiz pointed to a neatly-coiled cord just inside the helicopter's open doorway. Reaching in, he grabbed the cord. It uncoiled as he pulled it from the cockpit.

That cord had a purpose which Lofty well knew. Wiz had used it before several times in an emergency. One tug at the cord, which was attached to the controls, and the helicopter would rise !

Wiz and Lofty held on to the rope ladder—and then Wiz tugged the cord.

Up went the helicopter, with such speed that the Colonel almost fell from his seat His soldiers below dare not shoot at the pals for fear of hitting the Colonel, or his prisoner, the King. Besides, the King's loyal supporters inside the palace had now reached the roof and were attacking the party that the Colonel had left to defend the doors.

Wiz, clinging to the ladder, grinned at Lofty hanging just above him.

" What now ? Do we climb up into the cabin ? ' asked Lofty.

" No. We stay here ! " said Wiz.

" And freeze ? "

" Better than being shot off into this rough country, old boy," said Wiz.

Lofty stared down at the mountainous land below, and then back at the palace, on the roof of which a minor battle seemed now to be raging.

" But we're flying into enemy country ; to the stronghold where the Colonel means to keep the King prisoner," he gasped in dismay. " There'll be a score of armed men waiting for us. What chance have we got ? "

" We're going to get back this helicopter, and deliver the King," said Wiz resolutely. " That's the job, isn't it ? We took it on—and we'll do it."

" Look out—he's flying too low," yelped Lofty a minute later, as they cut across some mountain peaks.

" O.K. If he does go low, we'll have to nip smartly up the ladder," said Wiz with a chuckle. " Otherwise, we'll turn mountain climbers ! "

WIZ'S WIZARD WHEEZE

IF any one was more delighted than Wiz Hardy that the flight from the palace to Colonel Strandt's mountain stronghold was short and swift, that someone was certainly Lofty. His teeth were chattering, and his skin was turning blue with cold when at last the helicopter started to go down.

They saw a castle-like fortress on a mountainside, a group of men were clustered at its gates, near an open car which stood at the head of a steep incline. A chauffeur sat at the wheel, and it was obvious to Wiz that directly the King landed he was to be driven away.

" Those men are armed with rifles," muttered Lofty. " They could pick us off with the greatest of ease."

" They are soldiers, and they won't do anything without being ordered," said Wiz comfortingly. " The chap responsible for giving the order is the Colonel—and he doesn't know we're here."

Down went the helicopter, heading towards the car.

It was such a forlorn hope that they could defeat all these soldiers and make off with the helicopter that Lofty was resigning himself to being captured.

Wiz had other ideas.

His first task was to distract the soldiers' attention, his second to keep the Colonel busy. He could achieve both those objects by one simple act !

Climbing above Lofty, he reached for the cord which was trailing out behind the helicopter.

" He's landing—he'll crash the ladder and us into the ground," gasped Lofty.

" No. I'm sending the helicopter up like a rocket. But first we must jump off, Lofty, when I give the word. Now -JUMP ! " yelled Wiz suddenly.

They jumped when they were within a yard of the ground. Even as they let go, Wiz caused the helicopter to shoot up. He had knotted the cord

Piloting the helicopter, the villainous Colonel Strandt headed for his mountain hide-out. He little knew that Wiz and Lofty were right on his trail, clinging to the helicopter's ladder!

short, so jamming the controls! The Colonel would have to fight to regain control and think hard to find out how to get his aircraft down.

Meanwhile -

Wiz and Lofty had dropped near the soldiers, who were so surprised by the big helicopter coming down and then swooping up, they hardly glanced at the pals.

Wiz, grabbing Lofty's arm, pointed to the helicopter.

"Keep 'em looking up," he muttered. 'We've got to collar that car, and get away!"

By pointing up to the aircraft, Wiz knew that he was keeping attention from himself That was essential.

To seize the car was Wiz's next aim.

It was a large car, heavy and, by the look of it, armoured. A chauffeur sat at the wheel, gaping up at the aircraft.

But Wiz realised that as soon as he seized the car, the soldiers might guess what he was up to. The order to fire might be given. Therefore, it would be best for Lofty to have a rifle and fire over the soldiers' heads low enough to keep their heads down.

He briefed Lofty in an undertone.

"Lofty, swift action's needed. I'm going to slog the chauffeur, let the car's brake off, and get the car moving down the slope. While I do that, you grab a rifle, and leap into the back seat. That tall chap gaping up—his rifle will do."

Wiz then edged towards the car.

He wasted not a moment. First he grabbed the chauffeur's cap by its peak and back, and jammed it down over the fellow's face, momentarily blinding him.

That done, Wiz grabbed him, heaved him from the car and released the hand brake.

A startled gasp came from a few soldiers who saw what was happening and the loudest gasp of all from a tall soldier who had been holding his rifle loosely by the muzzle. Lofty whipped away his rifle with one jerk, and then hurled himself into the back of the open car.

"Hands up!" yelled Lofty desperately, aiming the rifle at the soldiers. "Gosh, how does this rifle work? The bolt's—"

BANG! Zing!

The rifle fired, and the bullet whistled over the soldiers' heads

"Get going, Wiz," howled Lofty. "It's their turn to shoot now."

Wiz pushed the car forward, scrambling into it as it got under way.

Bullets whistled all around them!

The first bend was ahead, and Wiz swung the car round it at speed.

"Duck down, Lofty. This car has an armoured back!" Wiz called.

"You duck. They're shooting at you," retorted Lofty.

In a minute, there would be cars coming in pursuit.

But what of the helicopter? Wiz dared not take his eyes from the road, but Lofty, crouched in the back, yelled to him what was happening.

"The Colonel's flying off—" announced Lofty.

"I expect he can't get the thing down. He'll have to land on the mountainside," said Wiz. "Mark where he lands, Lofty."

Wiz hoped to get clear from his pursuers and drive to where the Colonel landed the helicopter containing the captured King.

The officer in charge at the Colonel's fortress had sent two cars, packed with troops, in pursuit of the pals.

When Wiz swung into the straight, and gave a quick look back, he saw that the two cars were not far behind. They were modern cars, with good brakes and acceleration.

From both cars men were firing.

With a clatter Wiz's windscreen fell to pieces. Another bullet whistled past his ear!

Wiz flung himself sideways, and swung back the bullet proof off-side door. Using it as a shield, he

could lean out and keep an eye on the road. Lying full length, head outside, he could still operate the accelerator, and brake, and hold on to the steering wheel.

His pursuers thought that Wiz had collapsed. The firing ceased.

"Turn right at the cross roads ahead," yelled Lofty. "The helicopter is perched on a small plateau not far from there."

"O.K. But I can't corner like this, though. I've got to sit up," said Wiz. "Get that rifle ready, Lofty. Bob up and fire. I'll make the car swerve first to let them think it's out of control."

Wiz sent the car swinging and lurching.

"Now!" he yelled. "Open fire!"

THE BOULDER BARRICADE

LOFTY bobbed up, the rifle to his shoulder.

"Fire at the leading car's radiator," yelled Wiz.

Lofty fired, but the car moved and he missed his aim. Nevertheless, the windscreen of the first car was shattered, and the car swerved across the road.

Lofty's second shot holed the radiator of the second car, causing the water to stream on to the roadway.

Wiz swung his car round the bend, and flat out charged for the mountain road along which the helicopter had landed.

"This old tub will never make it," he said. "There's a long winding downhill stretch. Hang on, Lofty, we've got to lose them!"

Wiz, two hundred yards in the lead, took the car down-hill at a fantastic speed. The brakes were weak, and he had to change to a lower gear in order to slow the bucking car.

On the bends Wiz fought for control. At fifty, sixty, seventy miles per hour he slithered the car, heavy and clumsy, around the winding bends.

"O.K., we're ahead—they're out of sight," Wiz shouted. "I'm stopping—if I can—by that heap of boulders."

Wiz only stopped after a screaming change into bottom gear that nearly wrecked the engine!

"Boulders! Come on, strew the road with them, Lofty," he ordered.

He rolled the boulders into the road just out of sight round the bend, and then he pulled Lofty back into the car. He got the car moving again, and before the first of the pursuers came into sight, he was reeling round the next bend.

Then the first pursuing car hit the boulders around the bend. The crash was so terrific that Wiz heard it above his own clattering engine noise!

The biff when the second car, unable to stop, hit the back of the first was even louder!

"Now, we climb the mountain. And even this old tub can get away from foot-sloggers uphill," chortled Wiz, looking back.

"What now? Surely Colonel Strandt will shoot us at sight?" queried Lofty, baffled and amazed.

"Not a bit. You hide with that rifle. I'll put on the chauffeur's cap. He dropped it here," said Wiz "The Colonel will think we're his men."

He picked the cap from the floor, and put it on

Meanwhile, Colonel Strandt stood beside the helicopter on a mountain plateau, and surveyed the countryside. He could not see Wiz or the other cars; but he had a distant view of the stronghold where he had intended to land the King.

"My plans have gone slightly astray," he said to the King who, bound securely, was still a prisoner in the aircraft. "But it will be only a matter of minutes before my men arrive."

"You are a rogue and a traitor, Strandt," said the King, who'd managed to free himself of his gag. "And the day will yet come when you will get your deserts."

Colonel Strandt laughed mockingly.

"Even when my plans suffer a hitch, I have always found a way round them. I have stolen the Englishmen's helicopter, and the slight fault in the controls has had no worse effect than landing us slightly away from the target—"

He broke off as he saw a car approaching round the bend.

"Here we are. Now Sire! Here is your car."

But the car with the broken windscreen drove straight at him!

"Stop, you fool!" Strandt yelled in terror.

From the rear of the car rose Lofty, aiming his rifle point blank at the Colonel.

"Hands up!" he snapped.

Wiz, letting in the clutch, drove the car gently at the startled Colonel.

"Very well!" the Colonel cried, and held up both hands.

"Bind him," called the King excitedly. "I have plenty of bonds he can have. He wanted my kingdom and my treasure chest; he can have my bonds instead."

Wiz readily set the King free, and without waste of time, tied up the bewildered Colonel. That done, the Colonel was flung into the aircraft, a helpless prisoner.

"You cannot fly the helicopter; the controls are jammed," snarled the Colonel. "There is no escape for you. My men will be here in a minute."

Wiz laughingly explained the trick he had played, and quickly freed the controls of the cord.

A good ten minutes before the first of the Colonel's men reached the spot, the King, Wiz and Lofty were airborne.

"I'm sorry about the interruption, Sire," said Wiz to the King, as the helicopter roared away from the scene, "but we'll deliver you safely as scheduled."

"Of that I have not the slightest doubt," smiled the King, "after your most efficient rescue. I only wish you were my subjects. You have done a truly remarkable job."

The King was safely delivered to his anxiously waiting supporters at the palace, and the rebel chief, Colonel Strandt, placed in the dungeons

As for Wiz and Lofty, they were given a real hero's welcome by the overjoyed Royalists. At the King's suggestion, they decided to take a holiday, staying with him at his palace, where they had a right royal time.

Daily Record LATE EDITION

SCIENTISTS LAND ON THE MOON

By Harry Hollinson, D.F.C.

(Member of the British Interplanetary Society)

WITHIN your lifetime you may read a headline like this in your newspaper. In fact, you may even see a great deal of the voyage and the landing on your television screens at home.

Experts are agreed that a spaceship will reach the moon before the end of this century. Some say it may be as early as 1970.

And after the moon it will be the turn of the planets, for the moon will mostly be used as a jumping-off point for other voyages farther into space.

To-day, scientists are busily engaged in experimenting with fuels, metals, radar and radio for use in rockets. There are large proving grounds in America, Australia and Canada, which have cost millions of pounds, and are fitted with runways, launching racks, laboratories and workshops.

Unfortunately, most of this rocket experimenting is for war purposes, but each new discovery in rocket science helps man on his way to the moon.

Fifty years ago a Russian scientist called Ziolkowski wrote a book, in which he said that man could design a rocket-propelled ship that could take him clean away from the earth to the moon or the planets.

For many years his book was neglected until, about the time of the First World War, three other scientists, a Rumanian, a Frenchman and an American, began to experiment with rocket motors.

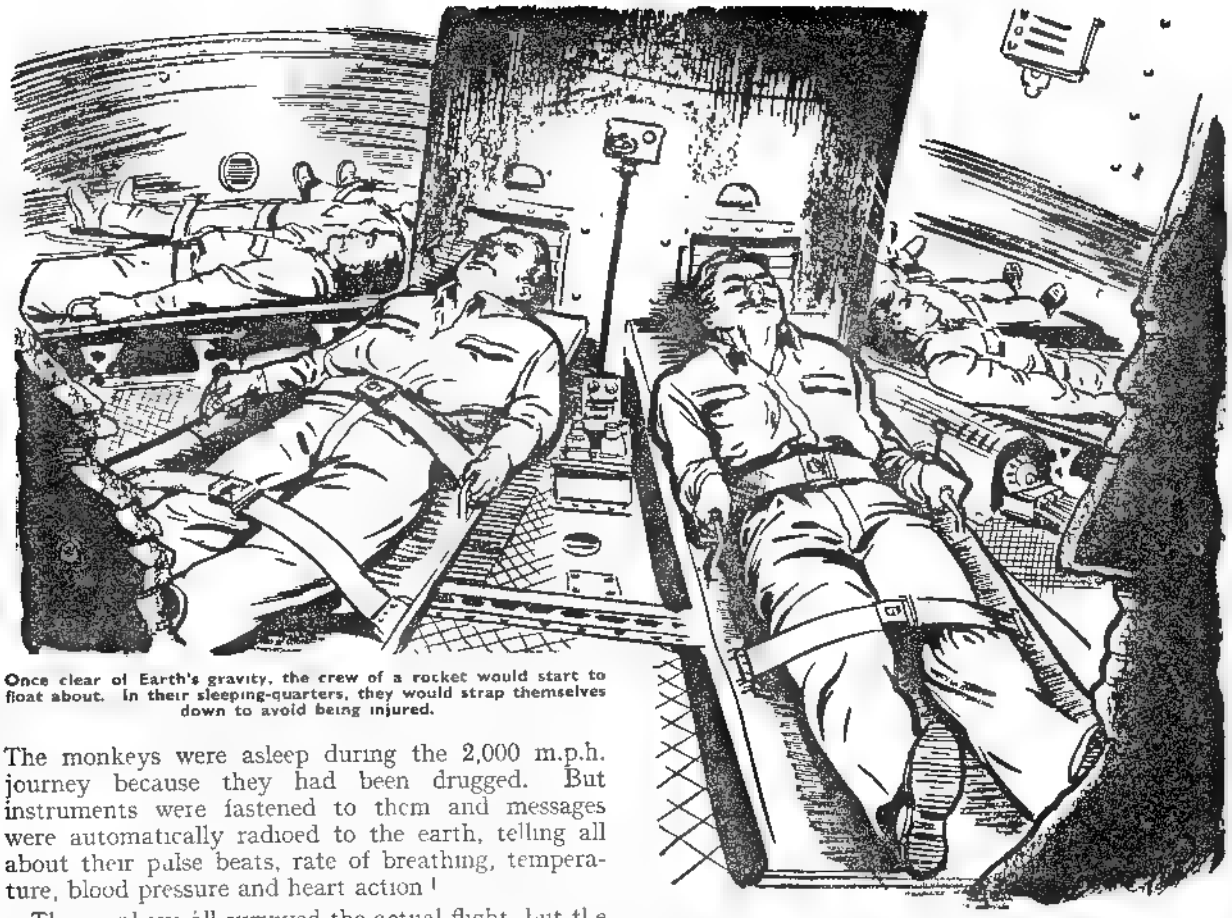
The Nazis were the first people to design and make a really large rocket. Their V2 rocket reached a peak altitude of 70 miles and a speed of over 3,000 m.p.h.

After the war, Britain captured a lot of secret information about rockets. We also collected a large number of V2s and some of the German scientists who worked on them.

In America to-day, at White Sands, New Mexico, experiments are being made with these rockets.

Mice and monkeys were put into specially-designed cabins in rockets and fired to a height of 80 miles! During the flight, through and beyond the earth's atmosphere, the mice were automatically filmed as they ran about their small compartment.

Astounding Facts and Forecasts about Space Travel



Once clear of Earth's gravity, the crew of a rocket would start to float about. In their sleeping-quarters, they would strap themselves down to avoid being injured.

The monkeys were asleep during the 2,000 m.p.h. journey because they had been drugged. But instruments were fastened to them and messages were automatically radioed to the earth, telling all about their pulse beats, rate of breathing, temperature, blood pressure and heart action!

The monkeys all survived the actual flight, but the parachutes of four of them failed to open, and the fifth monkey came down so far away that he died before he could be rescued. The mice safely parachuted to the earth and are now living normally again. Each of these flights cost £30 000, so you can see that a return trip to the moon would be terrifically expensive!

The greatest height reached by man in a rocket-driven aircraft is 15 miles. Bill Bridgeman, a test pilot, flew a U.S. Navy Skyrocket at this height.

In 1951 a robot reached a height of 135 miles! This was the U.S. Navy's Viking Research Rocket, built by the Glenn Martin Company. It weighed 5½ tons, was 48 feet long and reached the astounding speed of 4,100 m.p.h.!

Two years earlier another record had been set up when a height of 250 miles was reached at a speed of 5,150 m.p.h. This record was not achieved by a single rocket, but a double one!

The bottom rocket was a V2, and fastened to the nose of this was a sounding rocket known as a W.A.C. Corporal. Together they towered over 60 feet into the air and weighed several tons!

Here's how the record height of 250 miles was attained with the double rocket:

The V2 was fired and reached a height of about 80 miles. At that height its fuel was completely burnt out, but the W.A.C. Corporal rocket had not yet been used. It had been arranged so that when the V2 had travelled as far as it could, the W.A.C. Corporal would be fired and the V2 would drop away. The W.A.C. Corporal was already 80 miles up and had the speed of the V2. Under its own power it was now able to climb the other 170 miles!

A rocket spaceship would work in a similar fashion to the double rocket. It is built in sections, each section containing a number of rockets. When the first set of rockets are burnt out, their section is jettisoned and drops away as the next series of rockets begins to fire. This means that the same amount of rocket power is being used on a machine which becomes lighter and lighter as it loses sections.

SPACE LINER TO TRAVEL AT 9,000 M.P.H.

SOME people have the idea that a rocket motor will not work in the vacuum of outer space because the gases from the rocket will have nothing to push against. This is not true.

Instead of the powder fuel of the firework rockets used on Guy Fawkes Night these rockets have liquid fuel. There is no oxygen in outer space and nothing will burn without oxygen, so there must be a tank with a liquid which will be turned by heat into oxygen.

These liquids come from storage tanks through pipes into the combustion chamber. Here a spark ignites them and the terrific heat turns the liquids

into gases. Now the gases expand and push against the walls of the chamber, looking for a way out They find the nozzle opening and rush out at a fantastic speed. In doing this there is a pressure of gases, and because of this the rocket is pushed in the opposite direction.

Here is something worth remembering. The faster the gases can escape from the ignition chamber, the faster the rocket will go in the opposite direction It they have to force their way through air, they will be slowed down and so will the rocket. Therefore a rocket works best in a vacuum, and is the only kind of motor known to-day which could propel a space ship

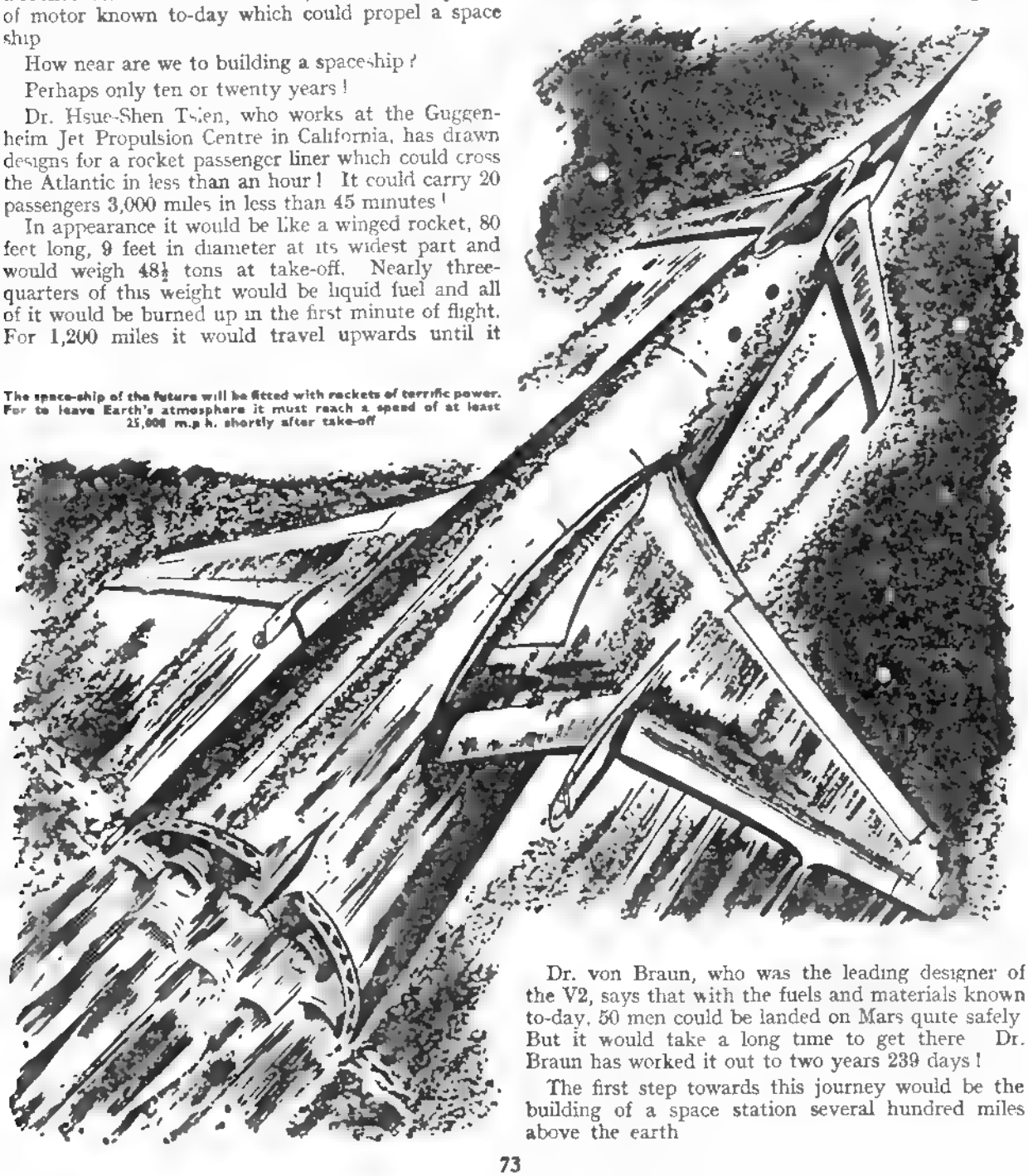
How near are we to building a spaceship ?

Perhaps only ten or twenty years !

Dr. Hsue-Shen Tsien, who works at the Guggenheim Jet Propulsion Centre in California, has drawn designs for a rocket passenger liner which could cross the Atlantic in less than an hour ! It could carry 20 passengers 3,000 miles in less than 45 minutes !

In appearance it would be like a winged rocket, 80 feet long, 9 feet in diameter at its widest part and would weigh 48½ tons at take-off. Nearly three-quarters of this weight would be liquid fuel and all of it would be burned up in the first minute of flight. For 1,200 miles it would travel upwards until it reached a height of 600 miles above the earth. It would then begin to glide down again and would touch the atmosphere at a speed of over 9,000 m.p.h.

If the rocket liner dived straight into the atmosphere at this speed, like a high diver going into the water, it would burn itself to nothing. The plane, however, would skim the upper atmosphere just as a flat stone can be made to skip across water. Each time it grazed the atmosphere it would slow down a little. This skipping business would be done until a safe speed had been reached and the rocket plane could glide to earth and land at about 150 m p.h.



The space-ship of the future will be fitted with rockets of terrific power. For to leave Earth's atmosphere it must reach a speed of at least 25,000 m.p.h. shortly after take-off

Dr. von Braun, who was the leading designer of the V2, says that with the fuels and materials known to-day, 50 men could be landed on Mars quite safely But it would take a long time to get there Dr. Braun has worked it out to two years 239 days !

The first step towards this journey would be the building of a space station several hundred miles above the earth

Forty-six rockets would ferry the parts for the space station and dump them in outer space. Men in space-suits would then build the station, moving about freely with no danger of falling and unhindered by weight of the parts they handled.

Nine hundred and fifty flights would be sufficient to transport the parts to construct a space station and 10 spaceships. Fuel for the station and ships would also be carried out from the earth. The spaceships would then fly to Mars, but instead of landing they would orbit, just as the moon orbits the earth. The 50 men would land on Mars in three small 200-ton rockets.

How is it that tons of materials can be sent up into outer space and left to " float " there?

To explain this, I'll ask another question. Have you ever swung a can of water round and round? If you swing it slowly the water will run out when the can is upside down, but once you reach a certain speed the water will stay put.

The muscles of your arm and the grip of your hand stops the can from flying off into the air. The speed of the can must match this pull, otherwise the water is pulled down from the can by gravity. In the same way, if a spaceship is given enough speed, it will reach a height where its speed will match or balance the pull of the earth, and so it will begin to orbit the earth.

The effect of gravity several hundred miles up is nil. A man in a space-suit could step out of the spaceship and remain alongside it, travelling in the same direction at the same speed! So parts for a space station or ship could be put overboard and would circle the earth in that orbit for ever.

LIFE ON THE MOON!

THE space station could be used for re-fuelling ships, it could provide world wide television, and furnish long-range weather forecasts. It could also, unfortunately, be used to direct explosive missiles against any part of the world.

Man's first objective will be the moon, but the moon has been described by scientists as airless and without water or vegetation.

It will, however, be used by man.

The first job of moon explorers would be to build living quarters. These would be temporary, pressurised cabins. Later, there would be workshops, laboratories, observatories, all of them fitted up so that the men could work, eat and sleep as comfortably as on the earth.

The first men in the moon may even level off the mountain tops and hollow the mountains to make living quarters!

Astronomers would be better off on the moon. The earth astronomer has to view the stars through our atmosphere, which distorts the vision just as a bad pane of glass does. On the moon there would be a much clearer view of the stars.

But one of the main attractions about the moon is the fact that its gravitational pull is only one-sixth that of the earth's. A person weighing 12 stones on earth, would weigh only 2 on the moon. If he can jump a height of 4 feet here, he would be able to jump 24 feet on the moon. A grand place to break all the Olympic records!

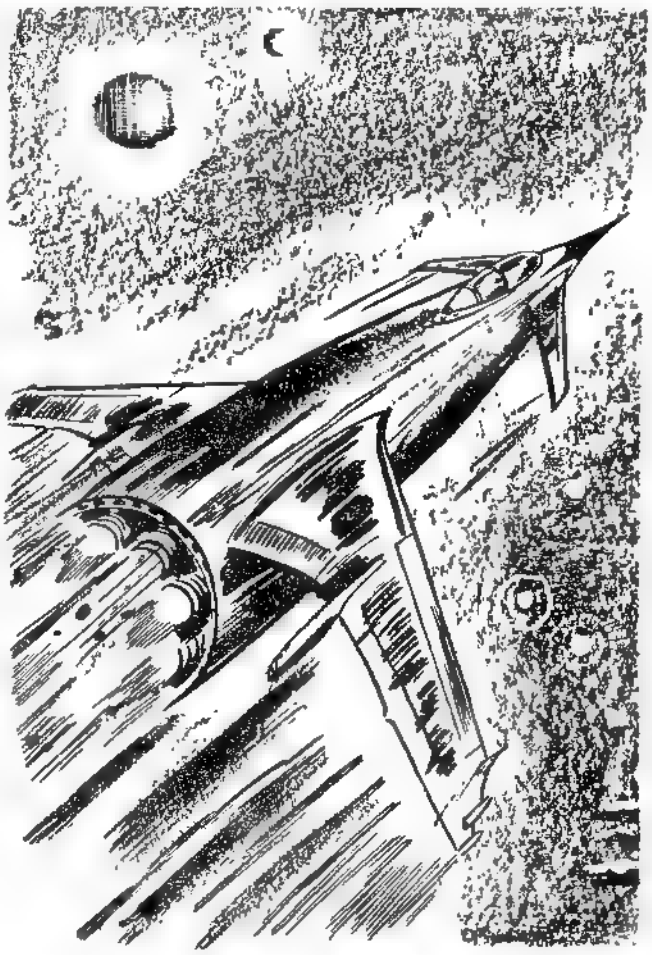
But the space-men will not be interested in amusing themselves. They want to push off to other worlds, and the moon, as I have already said, is a grand jumping-off point. To send a rocket from the moon to Mars would require only a sixth of the speed needed to get it away from the earth!

The escape speed from the earth is 7 miles a second, or 25,000 m.p.h. This is the speed a rocket would need before it could get clear of the earth's gravitational pull. But a mere 4,500 m p.h. would be enough to take the same rocket away from the moon.

Some people believe such great speeds will kill a man, but that is not so. There is no known limit to the speed at which man can travel. At this moment, while reading this article, you are being whirled through space at almost 70,000 m.p.h., as the earth races on its orbit round the sun. Yet you feel quite comfortable.

The danger lies in acceleration, or the time it

Passenger rockets, travelling from Earth to other planets, would refuel at huge space stations.



takes to reach these terrific speeds. If a spaceship reached 25,000 m.p.h. too quickly, the crew would be squashed flat by the pressure put on their bodies.

This pressure is measured in " G's." " Zero G " is your normal weight. If you were in an aircraft pulling out of a power dive, your weight would be increased several times. You would feel so heavy that if you were bending down at the time you might not be able to straighten up

In research stations in America there are several large whirligigs. By whirling human pilots round in them, scientists have discovered how much " G " the men can withstand. These tests have proved that a trained man can stand up to the acceleration of a rocket ship take-off

What stands in the way of a flight to the moon now ?

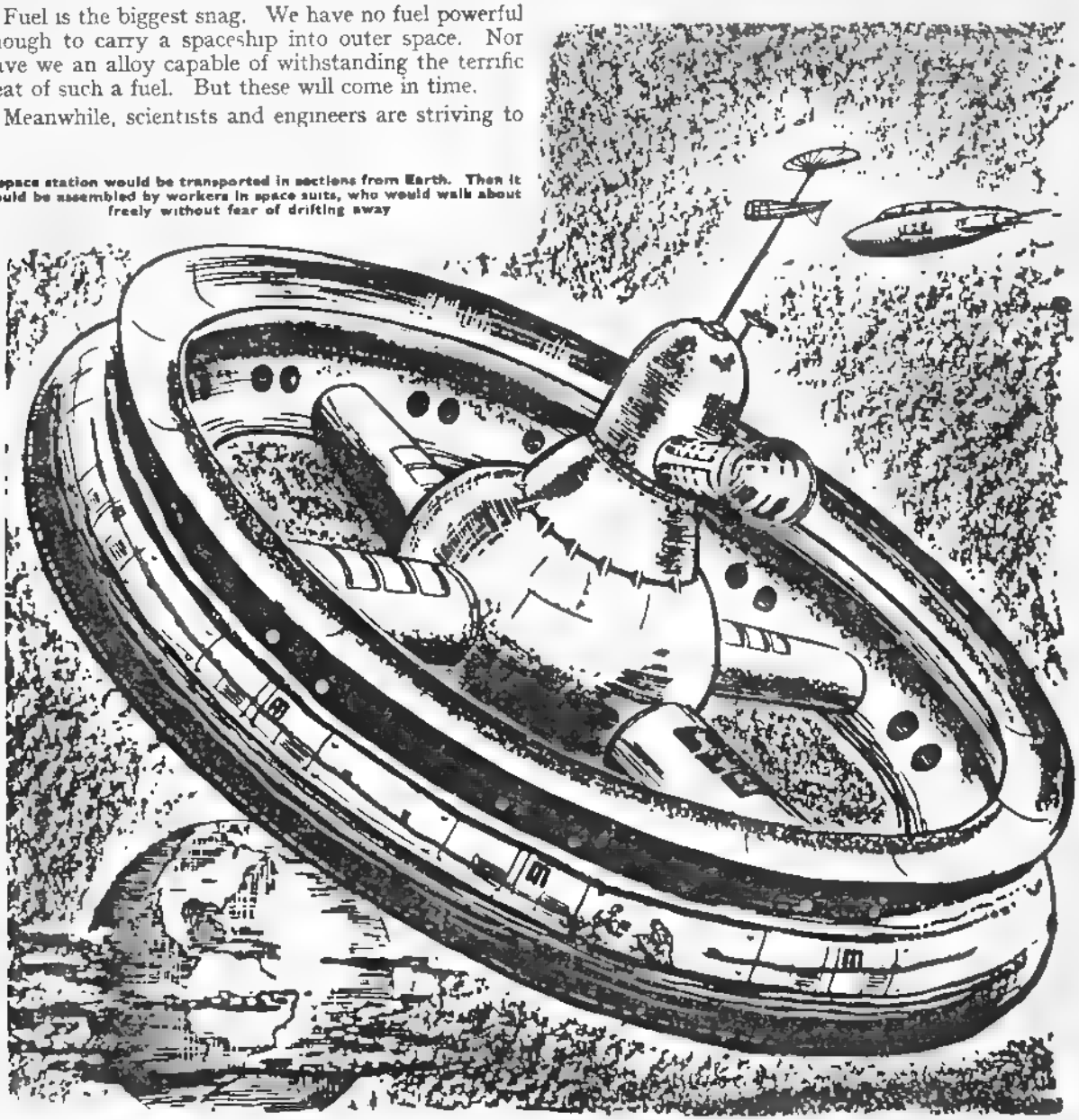
Fuel is the biggest snag. We have no fuel powerful enough to carry a spaceship into outer space. Nor have we an alloy capable of withstanding the terrific heat of such a fuel. But these will come in time.

Meanwhile, scientists and engineers are striving to send rockets farther and farther away from the earth. One day a rocket will fail to return. It will remain above the earth on its own orbit. Special instruments on board will radio conditions to scientists

Later, a man-carrying rocket will be launched on a short flight into outer space. Several of these will be made. Eventually it will be possible to send a piloted rocket on a round trip of the earth at a height of a few hundred miles. Then one day a rocket will set off for that long journey to the moon. It will not try to land, but will circle and return with valuable information, which will help other fearless explorers to land at a later date.

Man is preparing for the journey even now ! So it may not be many years before you read about the moon landing in your newspaper !

A space station would be transported in sections from Earth. Then it would be assembled by workers in space suits, who would walk about freely without fear of drifting away



THE LONE COMMANDOS in OPERATION GUNFIRE

By EDWARD R. HOME-GALL

DURING THE WAR, LONDON AND SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND WERE THE TARGET FOR GERMANY'S FLYING BOMBS. THEY CROSSED THE CHANNEL IN HUNDREDS, TO WRECK BRITISH HOMES AND TO BRING DEATH TO BRITISH PEOPLE. THE BOMBS WERE LAUNCHED FROM RAMPS IN NORTHERN FRANCE; AND IT WAS TO DESTROY THOSE RAMPS, AND THE STOCKS OF FLYING BOMBS NEARBY, THAT A FORCE OF BRITISH COMMANDOS LANDED NEAR CALAIS TO TAKE PART IN "OPERATION GUNFIRE". WITH THEIR JOB WELL DONE, THE COMMANDOS STARTED TO RETURN TO THE SHIPS WHICH WERE TO CARRY THEM BACK TO ENGLAND. THEY KNEW THAT OTHER TROOPS HAD HAD THE JOB OF DESTROYING ALL THE GERMAN COASTAL GUNS IN THE DISTRICT. THIS WOULD ENSURE THAT THE SHIPS WOULD BE ABLE TO SAIL IN SAFETY

AMONG THE COMMANDOS WHO HAD TAKEN PART IN THE RAID ON THE FLYING BOMB SITES WERE TWO PALS -- SGT. ROY TEMPEST AND PTE. JACK STEEL. SITTING IN A JEEP, THEY WERE NOW SPEEDING TOWARDS THE BEACH TO BOARD A LANDING CRAFT

WELL, SERG, IT LOOKS AS IF THE SHOW HAS BEEN A BIG SUCCESS, AND THAT THE BOYS WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE AN EASY GETAWAY. NOT A SINGLE GERMAN GUN IS FIRING

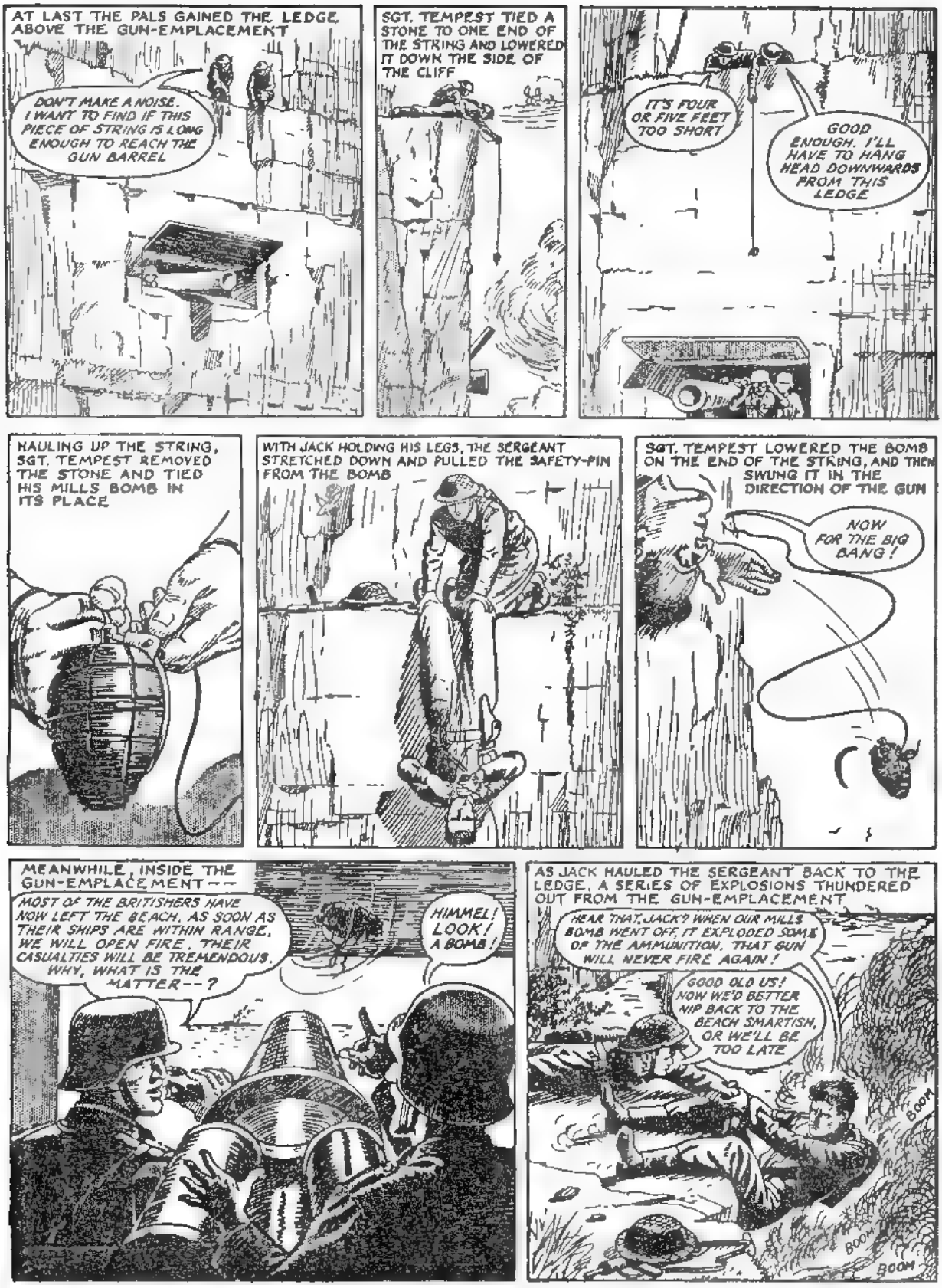
I GUESS ALL THE GUNS HAVE BEEN PUT OUT OF ACTION, JACK -- HELLO, WHAT'S THAT?

SGT. TEMPEST POINTED TO A CLIFF WHICH JUTTED OUT INTO THE SEA

I SAW A FLASH OF LIGHT HALF-WAY UP THAT HEADLAND. LEND ME YOUR FIELD-GLASSES, JACK

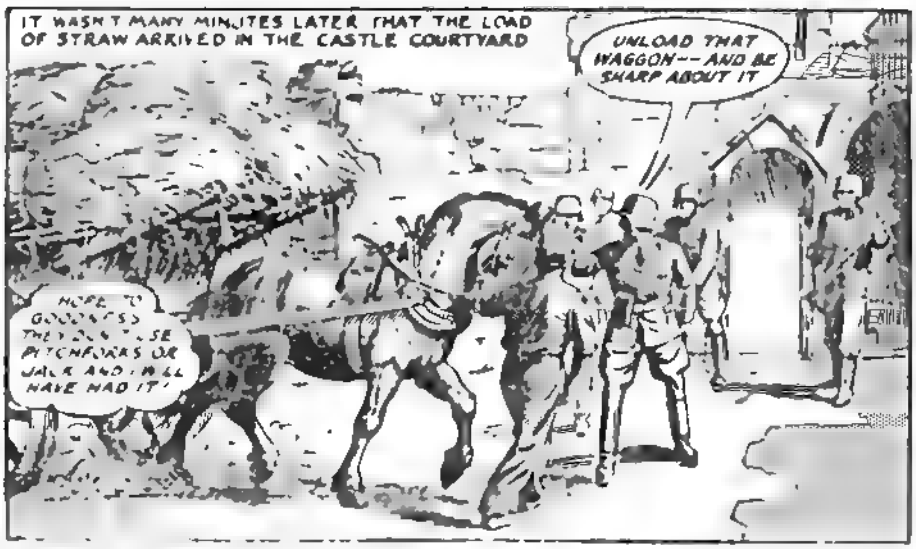
THE POWERFUL GLASSES SEEMED TO BRING A CERTAIN PART OF THE CLIFF RIGHT UP TO SGT. TEMPEST'S EYES

WITH A GASP OF ALARM, THE SERGEANT HANDED THE GLASSES TO JACK AND TOLD HIM TO HAVE A LOOK
JUMPING CRACKERS! IT'S A BIG COASTAL GUN! THE GERMANS HAVE BUILT THE EMPLACEMENT RIGHT INSIDE THE CLIFF. BUT WHY ISN'T IT FIRING AT OUR BOYS?
BECAUSE THEY AREN'T WITHIN IT'S ANGLE OF FIRE YET. BUT ONCE THE LANDING CRAFT AND OTHER SHIPS PUT OUT TO SEA, THAT GUN WILL BE ABLE TO BLOW THEM TO SMITHEREENS
INSIDE THE CLEVERLY-HIDDEN GUN-PIT A GERMAN OFFICER TURNED TO HIS MEN WITH A BEAM SMILE
"THE BRITISHERS TOOK US BY SURPRISE WHEN THEY LANDED, BUT THEY WON'T GET BACK SO EASILY! WHEN THEIR SHIPS PUT TO SEA AGAIN, THEY WILL BE A TARGET WHICH WE JUST CANNOT MISS!
BACK IN THE JEEP, SGT. TEMPEST AND JACK WERE BOTH MIGHTY GRIM
IF WE'RE NOT ON THE BEACH WITHIN 12 MINUTES, WE'LL BE LEFT BEHIND. WHAT ABOUT IT, SERG?
JACK--AND I'M WITH YOU! WE'RE GOING TO SAVE THE LIVES OF HUNDREDS OF OUR BUDDIES BY SILENCING
DO IT WITHIN 12 MINUTES-- WELL, THAT'S JUST TOO BAD FOR US
STRAIGHT AWAY THE SERGEANT SENT THE JEEP SPEEDING UP A CLIFF PATH IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SECRET GUN-EMPLACEMENT
WE'VE HELPED SERGEANTS TO A TOUGH JOB, SERG. HOW THE DEVIL ARE WE GOING TO PULL IT OFF?
BY MEANS OF A MILLS BOMB WHICH I HAVEN'T HAD TO SET OFF. IT'S STILL IN MY POCKET!
THE PALS LEFT THEIR JEEP ON THE HEADLAND AND BEGAN TO MAKE THEIR WAY ALONG THE FACE OF THE CLIFF
THERE'S A LEDGE ABOVE THE OPENING TO THE GUN EMPLACEMENT THAT'S WHERE WE'VE TO GET TO
IF EVER WE REACH ENGLAND AGAIN I'LL APPLY FOR A JOB AT A CIRCUS AS A HUMAN FLY!
THE CLIMB WAS FRAUGHT WITH PERIL. WHEN THE ROCK CRUMBLED BENEATH JACK'S FEET, THE SERGEANT GRABBED HIM ONLY JUST IN TIME.
OKAY, JACK-- I'VE GOT YOU!


AT LAST THE PALS GAINED THE LEDGE ABOVE THE GUN-EMPLACEMENT
DON'T MAKE A NOISE. I WANT TO FIND IF THIS PIECE OF STRING IS LONG ENOUGH TO REACH THE GUN BARREL
SGT. TEMPEST TIED A STONE TO ONE END OF THE STRING AND LOWERED IT DOWN THE SIDE OF THE CLIFF
IT'S FOUR OR FIVE FEET TOO SHORT
GOOD ENOUGH. I'LL HAVE TO HANG HEAD DOWNWARDS FROM THIS LEDGE
HAULING UP THE STRING, SGT. TEMPEST REMOVED THE STONE AND TIED HIS MILLS BOMB IN ITS PLACE
WITH JACK HOLDING HIS LEGS, THE SERGEANT STRETCHED DOWN AND PULLED THE SAFETY-PIN FROM THE BOMB
SGT. TEMPEST LOWERED THE BOMB ON THE END OF THE STRING, AND THEN SWUNG IT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE GUN
NOW FOR THE BIG BANG!
MEANWHILE, INSIDE THE GUN-EMPLACEMENT--
MOST OF THE BRITISHERS HAVE NOW LEFT THE BEACH. AS SOON AS THEIR SHIPS ARE WITHIN RANGE, WE WILL OPEN FIRE. THEIR CASUALTIES WILL BE TREMENDOUS. WHY, WHAT IS THE MATTER--?
HIMMEL! LOOK! A BOMB!
AS JACK HAULED THE SERGEANT BACK TO THE LEDGE, A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS THUNDERED OUT FROM THE GUN-EMPLACEMENT
HEAR THAT, JACK? WHEN OUR MILLS BOMB WENT OFF, IT EXPLODED SOME OF THE AMMUNITION. THAT GUN WILL NEVER FIRE AGAIN!
GOOD OLD US! NOW WE'D BETTER NIP BACK TO THE BEACH SMARTISH, OR WE'LL BE TOO LATE
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

DELIGHTED AT THEIR SUCCESS, THE PALS STARTED BACK ALONG THE CLIFF-FACE. SUDDENLY SGT. TEMPEST GASPED.
WHAT'S UP?
GOSH! THERE'S ANOTHER GERMAN GUN-EMPLACEMENT BUILT IN THE CLIFF ALONG THERE--AND I CAN SEE TWO MORE BEYOND IT! IF THEY OPEN UP ON OUR BOYS, THERE'LL BE NO END OF CASUALTIES
GUTTURAL VOICES FROM BESIDE THE GUNS COULD BE HEARD BY THE TWO COMMANDOS
NUMBER ONE GUN READY!
NUMBER TWO GUN READY!
NUMBER THREE GUN READY!
BEFORE SGT. TEMPEST AND JACK COULD DECIDE WHAT TO DO, A MACHINE-GUN OPENED UP FROM A LOOPHOLE
WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT, JACK! PRETEND TO BE HIT AND DROP INTO THE SEA!
ONE OF THE GERMAN OFFICERS PEERED DOWNWARD WITH SATISFACTION
THE ENGLANDERS HAVE FALLEN INTO THE SEA AND HAVE NOT COME UP AGAIN. IF THEY WEREN'T KILLED BY OUR BULLETS THEY HAVE BEEN DROWNED

THE TWO COMMANDOS, HOWEVER, WERE VERY MUCH ALIVE! AFTER SWIMMING UNDER-WATER, THEY HAD GOT TO THE SHORE AND HAD CLIMBED TO WHERE THEY HAD LEFT THEIR JEEP!
OUGHT WE TO HURRY DOWN TO THE BEACH AND REPORT WHAT WE'VE DISCOVERED, SERG?
IT WOULDN'T DO ANY GOOD OUR CHAPS MUST GET AWAY BEFORE GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE; AND OUR DESTROYER ESCORT COULD SHELL THE CLIFF FOR AN HOUR WITHOUT SMASHING THOSE COASTAL GUNS--THEY'RE SO WELL PROTECTED. OUR BEST PLAN IS TO TRY TO BLOW UP THE GUNS OURSELVES
AT THAT MOMENT THE COMMANDO PALS HEARD A FRENCHMAN IN A NEARBY FARMYARD
THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA. LET'S HAVE A WORD WITH HIM. P'RAPS HE KNOWS WHERE THE ENTRANCE TO THE GERMAN BATTERY IS
S-S-E! YOU CAN BET HE'S BEEN KEEPING HIS EYES OPEN
ALTHOUGH IT MEANT ABANDONING ALL HOPE OF RETURNING TO THE BEACH-HEAD BEFORE THE LAST BOAT LEFT FOR ENGLAND, SGT. TEMPEST AND JACK HEADED CAUTIOUSLY FOR THE FARM
NOW TO WORK, MY BEAUTY THE FIGHTING IS OVER, AND THE BRAVE BRITISH SOLDIERS ARE NEARLY ALL BACK ON THEIR SHIPS
THAT SOUNDS PROMISING, SERG!
YES! MOST OF THESE FRENCH PEASANTS HATE THE NAZIS. I THINK HE'LL BE WILLING TO RISK HIS NECK TO HELP US--IF HE CAN
OVERCOMING HIS SURPRISE AT SEEING THEM, THE FRENCHMAN BECKONED THE PALS INTO A BARN
OH M'SIEURS I WILL HELP YOU YOUR RAID LAST NIGHT WAS MAGNIFICENT! ALL THE NIGHT I WATCH IT. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
WHEN SGT. TEMPEST SPOKE OF THE HIDDEN COASTAL BATTERY, THE FRENCHMAN NODDED EAGERLY
YOU SEE THAT OLD RUINED CASTLE, M'SIEURS? I AM SURE THE ENTRANCE TO THE BATTERY IS IN THERE! EVERY NIGHT I HEAR LORRIES GOING IN THAT DIRECTION
AND TO-DAY I AM ORDERED TO TAKE THIS WAGGON-LOAD OF STRAW TO THE CASTLE
I BET IT'S WANTED FOR FILLING THE STRAW MATTRESSES THAT THE GUN CREWS SLEEP ON
THEN THAT'S HOW WE'LL GET INTO THE CASTLE. WE'LL DISGUISE OURSELVES AS BUNDLES OF STRAW!

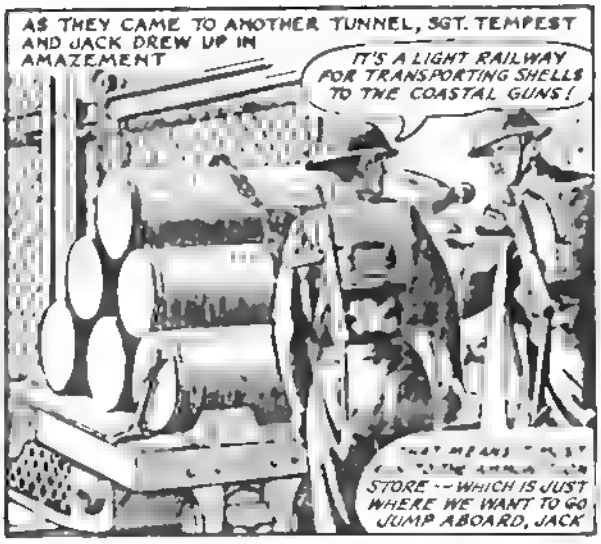

IT WASN'T MANY MINUTES LATER THAT THE LOAD OF STRAW ARRIVED IN THE CASTLE COURTYARD
UNLOAD THAT WAGGON -- AND BE SHARP ABOUT IT
HOPE TO GOODNESS THEY DON'T USE PITCHFORKS OR JACK AND I'LL HAVE HAD IT!

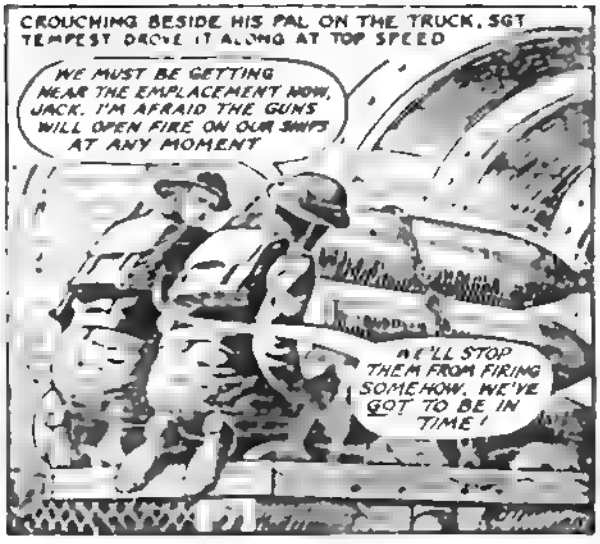
SGT. TEMPEST'S DARING SCHEME WORKED EVEN BETTER THAN HE HAD HOPED. A FATIGUE-PARTY SET TO WORK AT ONCE CARRYING THE LARGE BALES OF STRAW INTO THE RUINED CASTLE. THE GERMAN SOLDIERS WERE IN A HURRY TO GET THE JOB FINISHED. THEY WERE ANXIOUS TO CLIMB UP INTO THE BATTLEMENTS AND WATCH THE BRITISH SHIPS BEING SUNK BY THE HIDDEN GUNS

NOT ONE OF THE GERMANS DREAMT THAT TWO OF THE BALES OF STRAW CONTAINED BRITISH COMMANDOS!
THESE BUNDLES ARE VERY HEAVY FRITZ
NEVER MIND THIS IS THE LAST ONE I'LL LOCK THE DOOR AND WE'LL GO UP TO THE BATTLEMENTS

THE NEXT MOMENT, FORCING THEIR WAY OUT OF THE STRAW BALES, THE TWO COMMANDOS LEAPT INTO ACTION
BLITZEN! THEY'RE BRITISH SOLDIERS!

THE COMMANDO PALS NOW HURRIED ALONG A TUNNEL WHICH LED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE HIDDEN COASTAL BATTERY
THE GUNS WILL START FIRING AT OUR SHIPS AT ANY MINUTE, JACK. OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO FIND THE AMMUNITION STORE AND BLOW IT SKY HIGH!
YOU'VE SAID IT, SERG


AS THEY CAME TO ANOTHER TUNNEL, SGT. TEMPEST AND JACK DREW UP IN AMAZEMENT
IT'S A LIGHT RAILWAY FOR TRANSPORTING SHELLS TO THE COASTAL GUNS!
STORE -- WHICH IS JUST WHERE WE WANT TO GO JUMP ABOARD, JACK


CROUCHING BESIDE HIS PAL ON THE TRUCK, SGT TEMPEST DROVE IT ALONG AT TOP SPEED
WE MUST BE GETTING NEAR THE EMPLACEMENT NOW, JACK. I'M AFRAID THE GUNS WILL OPEN FIRE ON OUR SHIPS AT ANY MOMENT
WE'LL STOP THEM FROM FIRING SOMEHOW. WE'VE GOT TO BE IN TIME!

AFTER WHAT SEEMED AGES, THE TRUCK ARRIVED AT A GREAT CAVERN WHICH HAD BEEN TURNED INTO A GUN-EMPLACEMENT. ON ONE SIDE WERE THE GUNS; ON THE OTHER SIDE WAS THE ENTRANCE TO THE AMMUNITION STORE. ALL THE GUNS WERE LOADED, AND THEIR CREWS WERE STANDING BY -- WAITING FOR THE ORDER TO FIRE. EVERYONE WAS TOO CONCENTRATED ON HIS JOB TO PAY ANY ATTENTION TO THE NEWLY-ARRIVED AMMUNITION TRUCK

IT'S A RACE AGAINST TIME! AS SOON AS THAT OFFICER AT THE PERISCOPE SEES OUR SHIPS STEAMING OUT TO SEA, HE'LL GIVE THE ORDER TO OPEN FIRE

ONCE IN THE STORE THE TWO COMMANDOS GRABBED SOME EXPLOSIVES AND MADE A ROUGH-AND-READY TIME BOMB. GRIMLY SGT. TEMPEST PUT IT AMONG THE AMMUNITION AND LIT THE FUSE
IT WILL EXPLODE IN UNDER TWO MINUTES. QUICK -- BACK TO THE TRUCK!
WE'LL HAVE TO STEP ON IT, SERG, IF WE'RE TO SAVE OUR OWN SKINS!

THE OFFICER AT THE COMBINED PERISCOPE AND RANGE-FINDER RAPPED OUT FIRING ORDERS
H.E. ZERO 10 DEGREES. FUSE SETTING 2.9. RANGE 2300 METRES
IT'S A MATTER OF SECONDS NOW, JACK!

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, ONE OF THE GERMAN GUNNERS GAVE A YELL OF ALARM
HERR KOMMANDANT! SOMETHING IS
LOOKING BACK, THE TWO COMMANDOS SAW THE KOMMANDANT RUSH TO THE FUSE AND EXTINGUISH IT WITH HIS FOOT
MY ONE ACT OF BRAVERY MAY HELP ME TO FUSE THESE SHELLS SO THAT THEY WILL DETONATE ON IMPACT!
THE PALS WORKED LIKE GREASED LIGHTNING WITH THE SHELLS PREPARED, THEY SENT THE TRUCK RUMBLING DOWN INTO THE GUN-EMPLACEMENT -- JUST AS THE OFFICER WAS GIVING HIS FINAL ORDERS
I THINK WE'RE GOING TO BE JUST IN TIME!
BUT TEMPEST WAS RIGHT! FOR EVERY ONE OF THE GERMAN GUNS WAS SHATTERED BY THE LOAD OF SHELLS!
THE TWO COMMANDOS ESCAPED FROM THE TUNNEL BY MEANS OF THE SHELL LIFT. HASTILY RETURNING TO THEIR JEEP, THEY DROVE MADLY FOR THE BEACH
ALL OUR SHIPS AND THE LADS ABOARD 'EM ARE SAFE, JACK. HURRAH!
IT'S TERRIFIC, SERG! AND WE'RE ABOUT TO BE PICKED UP BY A BRITISH HELICOPTER. WE'LL BOTH BE HOME FOR DINNER - AND OLL, AM I HUNGRY!

RUST'S the BOY for STUNTS!

By Vernon Crick

ALL THE THRILLS OF THE FAIR!

RUST RANSOM, the usual wide smile on his face, sat at the wheel of his powerful but ancient Bugatti car and roared through the drowsy countryside on a Sunday afternoon. Beside him sat Bob Jakes, his young companion and handy man.

Rust was a stunt man who went round the country with circuses, fairs and shows of all kinds, performing daring stunts that no one else would tackle.

He would do anything If the stunt was crazy and dangerous enough to make spectators' hair stand on end, it was a safe bet that the lad to do it was Rust

Having just completed a job with a film company, he was out of a job at the moment, and was heading South in the hope of picking one up, for both he and Bob were bitten by the wanderlust and wanted a change.

As they shot along the road, a figure suddenly sprang out of a hedge by the roadside and waved to them.

"Somebody wanting a lift, I expect," said Rust, taking his foot off the accelerator.

Gently he applied the brakes, and the car slid to a standstill beside the man who had waved He was a gigantic fellow with long black hair and muscles that bulged so much that his jacket appeared to be in danger of splitting.

"Good afternoon," he said, with a peculiar little bow, "if you please, I haf long ways to go and in the feet am weary. If you would the kindness haf to lift me along, I should have big t'anks for you."

Rust grinned. "You look a pretty hefty lump to lift," he said "But I daresay my old salmon can will stand it. Where do you want to go?"

"To Beechminster," said the giant. "To the fair where the strong man I am."

"That's quite a walk," said Rust. "What happened? Did you get left behind when the fair moved?"

The giant shook his head. "No, I am Samson, the strong man of the fair," he said. "But sometimes I am Samson of the bad temper, and at Bristol, where we had the fair, I also haf the bad temper, and at the Boss say rude names so he gives me the bag."

"The sack, you mean," put in Bob.

Samson nodded. "It is so," he said. "I am the sack given and the fair goes away. Then comes a letter saying, 'Samson, you big mutt, get on your

The Dare-devil Exploits of a Wall of Death Speedster

flat feets and come again to the fair at Beechminster ! ' But all my money I haf spent and the flat feets are tired."

" Well, you're lucky," Rust chuckled. " Because we're not heading anywhere in particular, and if there's a fair at Beechminster we might as well go there. There might be a job going."

They got under way again, and on the journey Rust then told Samson about himself, and asked if there was an opening for a stunt man with the fair.

" Perhaps. I do not know," Samson replied. " But if you come with me, I will speak with the Boss for you and tell him how you haf made kindnesses to me."

" O.K.," said Rust. " Only don't go and have a temper when you introduce us, will you ? "

A great smile lit up the strong man's brown face.

" In Czecho-Slovakia, where I come from," he said, " we should call us brother of the show, and for you I will be a little lamp."

" Lamp ? " said Rust, puzzled. " You mean ' lamb,' surely ? "

" Yes, that is him—the leetle sheeps," said Samson with a grin.

Eventually they reached the fair, which turned out to be quite a large one with a scenic railway, dodgems, octopus, Wall of Death, and the usual side shows. Samson lost no time in introducing Rust to Joe Martin, the " Boss " of the fair. Martin eyed Rust for a while and then snapped

" What do you do ? "

" I'm a stunt man," explained Rust. " It all depends on what you want me to do."

"Well, I might be able to give you a job," said Martin. " But I warn you it's dangerous "

" I'm not afraid of danger," Rust told him. " What's the job ? "

" Come and see," said the Boss, leading the way to a large tent that stood almost in the centre of the fair.

Being Sunday it was deserted, but Joe Martin went in and switched on the light. It was a Wall of Death.

" Coo ! Wall of Death's nothing," said Bob. " Rust's ridden hundreds of 'em."

" Not ones like this," said the fair proprietor. " Look ! "

They looked, and both Rust and Bob could not help exclamations of surprise.

There was the usual wooden walled arena of the ordinary Wall of Death, but branching away from the top of it was a narrow track that led to the top of the tent, around it, and then back to where it started.

" There it is," said the Boss " If you can ride it, the job's yours."

As another individual joined the party, the proprietor nodded.

" This is Pete—my leading rider," he said.

" Does he ride up there ? " asked Rust.

" Not me," said Pete hurriedly " No one can do it. It ain't possible."

" Who used to do it ? " asked Rust.

" No one has ever tried," replied Joe Martin. " I had a man who was going to start to-morrow, but he got cold feet and quit. I know it's dangerous, but it's got to be to get the people in these days."

" How much do you propose to pay me ? " asked Rust.

" Two pounds a time. That's all I can afford. Business is not too good, but if you fetch 'em in, I might give you a bit more."

Rust walked all round to look at the track and the fastenings. The track was secured to a framework at the top of the tent, and at the four corners outside, stout ropes held the whole structure in place.

" O.K. I'll do it ! " cried Rust.

ON THE WALL OF DEATH

" WHEN do I start ? " Rust asked.

" To-morrow evening at six," replied Martin.

" Right, I'll be here. Bob will have a look over the bike I am to ride and make sure it's all right. He's a wizard with motor bikes."

Joe Martin nodded and left Rust and Bob to go with Pete to look at the bikes. When they were alone, Pete turned to Rust.

" Look here," he said, " I don't want you to do this stunt, see ? "

" Why not ? " asked Rust.

" Because I'm the big attraction around here, and I don't want anyone else stealing my act."

" Then why don't you do the stunt yourself ? "

" 'Cos I don't like it. It ain't safe."

" If that's the only reason you've got for my not doing it, I'm afraid you're going to be disappointed," said Rust.

" I've warned you ! It ain't safe. A lot of accidents could happen to a chap up there," said Pete, meaningly.

" You mean you might make them happen ? " asked Rust.

" I don't mean nothing," said Pete sullenly. " But if you want to keep a whole skin you'd better see the Boss right now and turn it in. Savvy ? "

Rust understood all right. He saw that Pete was trying to scare him off. But he was not easily scared. If there was one way of making sure that Rust Ransom did a stunt, it was to suggest that he was afraid.

But Bob, his faithful assistant, *was* a bit scared. Not for himself but for Rust. He didn't trust Pete, and made up his mind that he would keep a very sharp eye on him while Rust was performing. He sought out Samson and asked him what he thought of Pete.

" I like him, not much," said the strong man. " Mr. Rust, I like him plenty. You just tell me if that Pete starts any trouble, and I make the mince-meat of him, yes ? "

" O K., and thanks," said Bob, glad to know that they had at least one friend at the fair.

Rust was down at the Wall of Death bright and early next morning. He wanted to get in a bit of practice before the afternoon show, for, although ordinary Wall of Death riding would not have worried him, this was different.

For one thing, the circle round the top of the tent was slightly bigger than that round the small arena, and he would have to go faster to keep his balance.

For another, he wanted to make sure that everything was safe—just in case Pete tried any dirty work.

But everything seemed to be in order, and the bike that Bob had tuned up for him went like a bird.

Rust knew the risk he ran. If anything went wrong while he was tearing round that narrow track up in the air nothing could save him. But if nothing went wrong he was confident that he could do the ride—he had done worse things before.

Pete and the other riders were all there to see the first practice, and all except Pete admired Rust's courage.

Bob kicked the starter and the bike roared into life. Rust ran it two or three times round the wall to make sure that everything was running smoothly, then he came down and prepared for the big ride. He donned a crash helmet and thick leather jacket, and leapt astride the purring machine.

"O.K.," he cried. "Here I go!" Then he opened the throttle.

Four or five times he raced round the wall, getting nearer and nearer to the top while those below looked on in silence.

Faster and faster he went till it made the others dizzy to watch him.

Suddenly, with a roar from its exhaust, Rust switched on to the bridge that would take him over the heads of the spectators and on to the high track.

Bob's heart thumped as he watched his pal. He had seen Rust perform all sorts of mad stunts but he had never really got used to watching him risk his life for fun.

Rust zoomed up on to the circular track round the tent.

Would he be able to keep control when he flattened out? If he couldn't, Bob shuddered to think what would happen to him. If his nerve failed him for a second he would be lost.

But Rust's nerves were like steel. The bike never swerved an inch from the centre of the narrow track. The strain on the supports was terrific, and the whole structure sagged as the bike zoomed round.

Bob did not like it. What if one of the corner ropes should break?

He wanted to go outside and make sure that they were all right, but he couldn't take his eyes off his pal.

Once round Rust went, twice, three times, and then waved his hand to those below, swerved on to the bridge leading downward, and in a few seconds roared to a stop on the floor in the centre of the Wall of Death. He shut off the engine and dismounted.

"Well, how was it?" asked Martin, who had just come in.

"Not bad," replied Rust. "Not much different from doing it on the ordinary wall, if you've got a head for heights."

"Good. I'll go and get some handbills printed and given out. We should get a good crowd tonight"

They did. Long before six o'clock the tent was so crowded that no more people could get in. Joe Martin was delighted.

"This is the stuff to give 'em," he said, rubbing his hands together. "If they keep on coming in like this you'll soon be getting a rise."

The show opened in the usual way with the regular riders racing round the wall singly and then in pairs, and then Pete went on.

He gave a very good show. He rode on the vertical wall without hands, stood on the saddle of the machine, sat sideways with his arms folded and finally went round blindfold.

The crowd was enjoying itself and applauded loudly but they were saving something up for the final act.

They had seen all Pete's stuff before and although they still liked it they were waiting impatiently for the big thrill.

When Rust strolled into the arena dressed in his rust-coloured suit the cheering nearly lifted the roof off the tent.

Rust grinned and waved his hand as he cranked up his machine.

Only two people were not happy—Pete and Bob.

Pete was jealous because Rust was taking the glory from him, while Bob was anxious in case anything should happen to his pal!

SAVED BY SAMSON'S STRENGTH

BOB had examined everything before the show began. He knew Rust's bike was all right because he had gone over every bit of it.

He'd tested the track around the roof and found it secure. Then he had gone outside and tried the four great ropes that held everything up. They had also been O.K.

Now he stood beside his chief and waited for him to begin his perilous ride.

But Bob also kept one eye on Pete. When Pete suddenly made for the door, he followed.

Bob was determined not to let Pete out of his sight until Rust's perilous ride was over.

When Pete left the tent, Bob was close behind him, but the crowd outside was so great that in less than a minute he lost him.

What was he going to do? Bob felt sure that it was something that would harm Rust. He thought for a moment or two as he searched vainly for Pete. Then a chilling thought struck him.

The big ropes!

Supposing Pete should tamper with them, the whole track would collapse and Rust might be killed.

He had to make sure, and hurriedly he moved round the tent to the first rope. It was tight and firm, and so was the second, but as he approached the third he saw a dark figure close to it.

"Hey, you—stop that!" shouted Bob. For the man was tampering with the rope!

He ran forward but the figure disappeared into the gloom

Had he damaged the rope? Bob dashed up and examined it, and his heart stood still.

The rope was cut half way through!

What could he do? It was too late now to stop Rust embarking on his ride.

Bob seized the rope on both sides of the cut with

the idea of holding it together, but he realised immediately that he would not be strong enough.

He would have to get help. At any minute his pal would come flying out of the Wall of Death on to the high track.

Bob looked frantically round.

There were plenty of people about but who would be strong enough to hold the rope from breaking?

Then he spotted the banner over the next booth:

"Samson, the strongest man in the world."

Bob hesitated no longer. Like a flash he raced across to the strong man's tent, past the doorkeeper, and up to the stage where Samson was about to begin his act.

"Samson!" he cried, grabbing the strong man's leg. "I want your help! Someone is trying to kill Rust."

"What? I come at once!" cried Samson, and jumped off the stage.

Bob dragged him towards the door.

"Don't go away, peoples," called Samson. "I'll be back soon."

"Hey, you——stop that!" Bob roared, dashing forward angrily. For the man was slashing at a rope supporting the Wall of Death track on which Rust Ransom was riding. If the rope parted, Rust would crash!

Bob expected every minute to hear the Wall of Death tent go crashing to the ground, and did not let go of his strong man friend till they stood beside the cut rope.

"Hold it together!" cried Bob, grabbing the two parts of the rope himself. "Pete cut it to bring Rust down!"

They were not a second too soon. Even as they grabbed the rope they heard the roar of Rust's bike above their heads and felt the rope tighten.

"Hang on!" cried Bob. "If it breaks he will be killed."

Samson hung on and so did Bob, and as Rust swung round to the far side of the tent the strain became terrific.

Beads of sweat stood out on Samson's forehead, but he hung on.

Once Rust roared round—twice—three times! Then they heard his engine die away as he went down the bridge and back into the arena. A great burst of applause arose from the tent.

Bob lay over the rope almost crying with relief. Rust had been saved—but only by seconds.

"This Pete, he is a wicked man!" cried Samson, after Bob explained what Pete had done. "He must go to prison."

"We can't prove that he did it," replied Bob. "Although I know it was him."

Soon everyone else knew, too, for in his hurry to get away when Bob came on the scene, Pete had dropped his knife and Samson found it.

Pete denied that it was his, but many of the fair-ground hands recognised it and told him so.

Pete broke down and confessed. He said he was afraid that he would lose his job and had wanted to get rid of Rust. He had not intended to kill him; he only wanted to frighten him and had let his mad jealousy run away with him.

Joe Martin, the fair-ground chief, wanted to send for the police but Rust asked him not to.

"Let him alone," he said. "He's learnt his lesson, and I don't think we shall have any further trouble from him."

They didn't. Pete was no murderer and after he had cut the rope he had been more scared than anyone else, and was only too anxious to prove that he regretted his action.

For the remainder of the fair's stay at Beechminster, Rust gave a number of shows every night, and if he had wanted it he could have had a regular job.

But he had the itch to be on his way again, and when the fair moved on he and Bob said goodbye to the many friends they had made, not the least of which was Pete.

Under Rust's careful instruction he had learnt to ride the high track. He would be taking his rival's place when next the fair pitched its tents!

WORLD-WIDE QUIZ

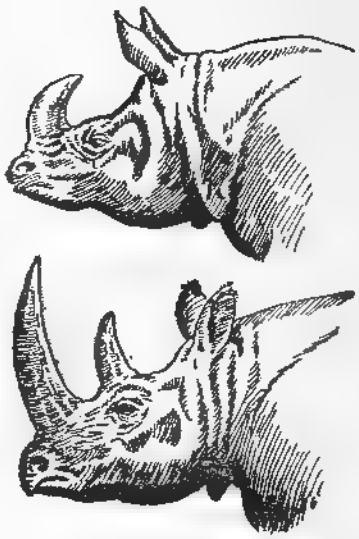
PXNXXPPLX
XPRXCXT
DXMSXN

1. PUT A VOWEL IN PLACE OF EACH X AND FIND THREE KINDS OF FRUIT!

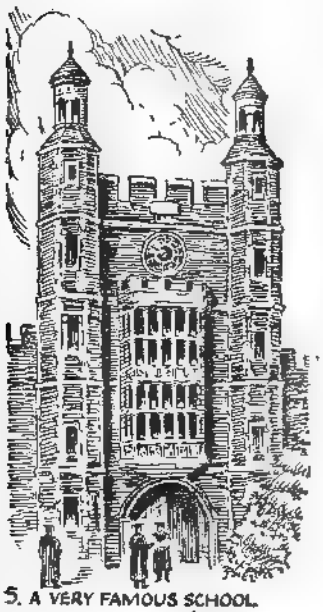
Have a Shot at the Answers—Then Check Them with the Correct Ones on Page 142

2. IS HE LOOKING OUT OF A CASEMENT, SASH OR BAY WINDOW?

3. WHAT HAVE THE MONK AND CHIMNEY IN COMMON?



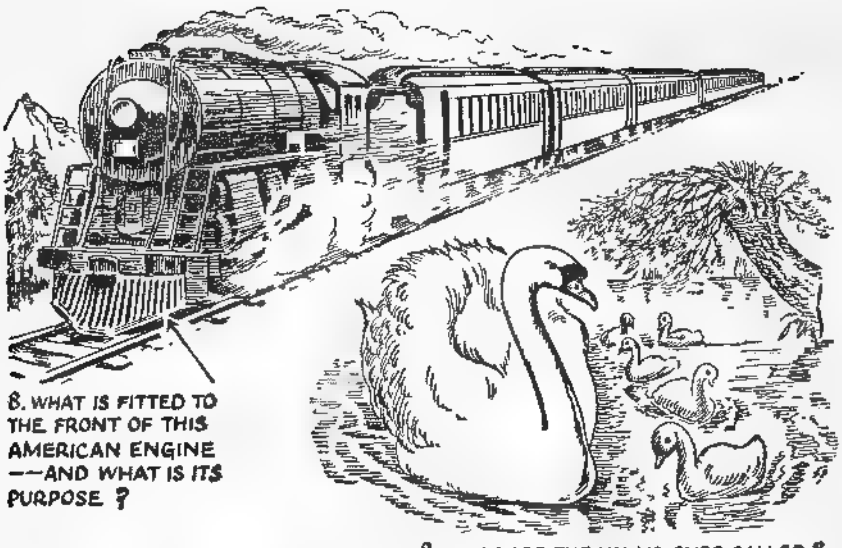
4. ONE HORN OR TWO—WHICH IS CORRECT?



5. A VERY FAMOUS SCHOOL. CAN YOU NAME IT?

6. WHICH KING HID LIKE THIS FROM HIS ENEMIES?

7. WHAT FAMOUS STORY CHARACTER IS THIS?

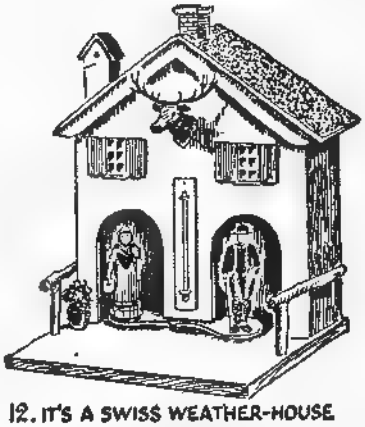


8. WHAT IS FITTED TO THE FRONT OF THIS AMERICAN ENGINE —AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE ?

9. WHAT ARE THE YOUNG ONES CALLED ?

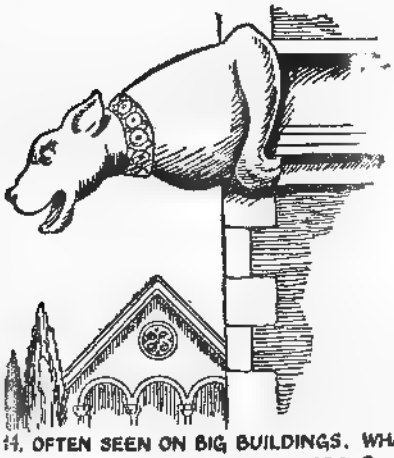
10. IS HE A SCOUTMASTER OR A POLICEMAN ?

11. THE RIDER IS DICK TURPIN. WHAT MISTAKE HAS THE ARTIST MADE ?



12. IT'S A SWISS WEATHER-HOUSE ORNAMENT. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RAIN IS COMING ?

13. WHAT IS THIS CEREMONY KNOWN AS ?



14. OFTEN SEEN ON BIG BUILDINGS. WHAT IS IT--- AND WHY IS IT THERE ?

15. HE'S AN ANCIENT BRITON SEE ANYTHING WRONG ?

16. WHAT IS THIS NAVIGATOR USING ?

TULAK HUNTS THE POLAR TERROR

By Derek Knight

INTO AN AMBUSH!

TULAK, the Eskimo boy, heard the crack of a shot and felt the bullet twitch the sleeve of his thick parka of caribou fur.

He was running with a long, tireless stride behind his ancient and much-repaired sledge, crouching so that he could lean forward with one hand on the raised board at the back. In the traces, six gaunt and hungry dogs strove valiantly to do the work of a full team of twelve, dragging the sledge smoothly over the great white expanse of snow.

Tulak glanced to one side, shielding his eyes against the sun's dazzling glare. From a jagged ridge of ice-covered rock in the distance he saw figures moving into view—men and sledges.

And one of the men had fired at Tulak!

Another shot echoed across the snows, and next moment there was a frantic yelping as the Eskimo boy's huskies piled up in a sprawling tangle. One of the two leading dogs had been hit by the bullet and gone down, throwing the rest into confusion.

"Up!" cried Tulak desperately. "Up, Jura! Up, Tanuk!" His long knife flashed as he struggled to cut the dead husky free from the harness. But even as the knife flashed and the panting huskies gathered in their positions again, Tulak knew it was hopeless.

The two sledges, each with a full team, were speeding across the snow to cut him off!

A warning shot whistled high over his head.

"Hai ee!" hailed a voice. "Be still—or the next shot will be for you!"

Bitterly, Tulak straightened. Knife in hand he waited as the sledges approached, a flurry of soft snow spurting from their wooden runners. They halted and two Eskimos plodded towards him. They carried rifles, and there were leering grins on their broad faces.

"It is but a boy," grunted one of the men. "And his sledge is poorly laden. See what miserable dogs he has to boast of!"

"Who are you?" Tulak asked grimly. "And why do you break the laws of the north by killing another's dog and threatening with your guns?"

The Eskimos exchanged glances.

"We are Ayug's men!" said one. "Come, boy! Whip up those curs. We shall take you to Ayug and he shall say whether you live or die!"

The Young Eskimo Trapper Who Was Forced to Join a Band of Outlaws!

Tulak gasped in anger and horror at hearing the name of Ayug. Throughout this frozen territory there were many little tribes of Eskimos. They lived a hard life, hunting walrus, seal and caribou, trapping the white fox, the arctic wolf, and the tiny ermine weasel, so that they could sell the pelts in the trading post a hundred miles to the south.

There was no bad feeling between the widely-scattered tribes. Within each tribe, every family lived for itself, asking no favours. Sometimes food was hard to come by, and there might be many weeks of hunger. But the Eskimos were proud and hardy. Somehow they survived.

But Ayug and his men! That was different. These men were little more than a band of brigands, led by a ruthless chief whose word was law. They were renegades, the bad and unwanted men from all tribes, who had banded together under Ayug. When times were bad, they would descend upon some little tribe, robbing them of all their carefully-hoarded food. Then they would disappear into the vast, silent wastes.

Tulak looked grim as he remembered some of the terrible stories he had heard about Ayug.

Half-an-hour later, his two captors brought him to Ayug's encampment on the edge of a frozen lake. Badly-made igloos were dotted about, but there were many sledges and the huskies looked strong and well-fed.

Ayug lolled on a thick pile of skins heaped on the back of a sledge. The outlaw chief was eating blubber, cutting chunks from a strip with a long, razor-sharp knife. As Tulak was brought before him, many of Ayug's ruthless gang crowded round.

Ayug stared at the Eskimo boy from black eyes, chewing slowly and rasping his chin with the smooth ivory handle of his knife.

"What is your name?" he grunted at last. "Where were you travelling—and why?"

Tulak met the other's eyes boldly. He sensed that if he showed any sign of fear it might be the end of him.

"I am Tulak," he said steadily. "I was travelling to the Kuwani Range, where the ice-slopes meet the Koukuji River."

"You are a boy," rapped Ayug, "no more than sixteen. Have you run away from your father and your family?"

Tulak's lips tightened.

"My father was killed last winter. I am the oldest boy of the family. Life has been bad for my mother and my sisters and my brothers. We have had little food for many weeks now. I came south to—" he hesitated, then went on defiantly, "—to hunt and kill Kral, the great white bear!"

For a moment there was silence, then a howl of laughter went up from the Eskimo outlaws. Kral was almost a legend—a giant polar bear, the largest of his kind in that territory. He lurked somewhere in the Kuwani Range, and many good hunters had lost their lives attempting to kill the mighty Kral.

Ayug was grinning

"Without a rifle?" he jeered, and Tulak flushed with shame A rifle was the most precious and important possession of any Eskimo. It was the mark of a man, a true hunter.

"I have no rifle," he muttered. "That is why my family is hungry. I have only been able to trap hares and small game. But I will kill this Kral with my knife! And when I kill him I will barter his pelt for many seal-skins, and his carcase will bring many more! Then I can go south to the trading post and with the skins buy a rifle and bullets to last a whole winter!"

Again there came a shout of laughter from the listening Eskimos. Ayug rose slowly to his feet, the long knife balanced on his hand. The laughter dwindled to silence, for the men knew that Ayug was considering whether to kill this foolish boy or to let him live.

Tulak knew it, too, but stood still.

Abruptly Ayug pushed the knife into its sheath and clapped a powerful hand on Tulak's shoulder.

"You have courage, Tulak," he growled. "It may be that you can become one of us. For the present, I will let you live. But there is no going back!" The bleak, mud-coloured eyes held a hundred terrible threats as they searched Tulak's face. "You join us—or you die!"

Then the outlaw chief gave Tulak a rough push, and turned away!

THE SILVER BIRD

TWO days had gone by, and Tulak sat by the edge of the frozen lake, mending a net. Other men were nearby, for they had been fishing through holes cut in the thick ice. The lake extended for nearly a mile, but the western half was sheltered by a high ridge, and the ice was thin. No Eskimo liked to fish through thin ice.

Tulak's thoughts were busy, desperately trying to think of some way of escape. This was summer, and the sun never sank beyond the horizon to bring darkness. For six months there would be sunshine for twenty-four hours of the day. And in winter, six months of purple twilight.

"I must have a sledge—and a good dog team!" Tulak muttered.

For to walk out into that desert of snow and ice without huskies and a sledge was to court certain death. And if, by some trick, he could get away with a sledge and team, Ayug would hound him down relentlessly. At this season a man's tracks would last for days, and Tulak would be lucky if he even got clear of the encampment before the hunt was up.

"Pig!" said a voice. "Pig with the brain of a mouse and the heart of a hare! Look at the ends of this net! Is this the way to mend a net?"

Tulak looked up to see Inouk standing before him. Inouk was a young man of twenty, a cruel and swaggering bully.

"I have no knife," Tulak said quietly. "It was taken from me—and I see it in your belt, Inouk. Give me my knife and the net will be properly mended."

Inouk stepped back and crouched a little.

" Come and take it ! " he challenged savagely. " In your hand—or in your heart ! "

There was a sudden silence, and Eskimos from all sides came running to form a great circle about Tulak and Inouk. Among these desperate men, fights would often flare up over nothing at all. When they fought, it meant that there would be only one survivor. Ayug did not interfere. Like the rest of his wild band, the outlaw chief enjoyed the excitement of watching a fight to a finish.

The Eskimos were grinning and chattering among themselves now as they waited for developments. It could not be a long fight, they knew, for Tulak was unarmed. That did not concern them. Among the men led by Ayug there was no such thing as fair play.

Tulak had come to his feet and moved forward so that he would have room to manoeuvre. The net still trailed from his right hand. Inouk had drawn the knife and was edging forward, a grin of delight on his face as he sought for some sign of fear in the eyes of his young opponent.

But Tulak was very cool, standing poised on his toes, never taking his eyes from Inouk. Twice Inouk feinted, pretending to dash in and strike, but Tulak merely turned slowly to keep facing his opponent as he circled.

A scowl of rage distorted Inouk's face, and with a sudden snarl he darted forward and drove a sweeping lunge towards Tulak's body. But Tulak was no longer there ! Lithe as a cat, he had leapt sideways at the last second, so that Inouk went plunging past, unable to keep his balance.

Then Tulak's right hand swung, and a shout of amazement went up from the watching renegades. The net spread like a great fan above Inouk as he made a stumbling turn. The weighted edges came down, and in an instant Inouk was enmeshed in the damp, clinging strands !

Tulak heaved fiercely on the corner of the net that he still held, and Inouk was jerked to the ground, twisting and struggling like a great fish. Before the trapped man could use the knife to cut himself free, Tulak was upon him.

One knee drove hard down into the small of Inouk's back, crushing the breath from him. Tulak's left hand forced Inouk's face down into the snow so that he could not breathe, and his right clamped upon Inouk's knife-wrist through the meshes of the net. With a twist and a wrench, Tulak broke his enemy's hold on the knife. Then, without haste, he reached carefully between the mesh of the net and grasped the weapon by its hilt.

As Tulak stood up, Inouk jerked his face from the snow and rolled over, panting. He was still helplessly trapped in the net. At the sight of the knife in Tulak's hand, Inouk's eyes widened in terror.

The Eskimos were urging Tulak on with laughs and shouts, admiring the neat trick by which he had won the battle. Now, of course, Inouk would die. That was the way of these men, who held life so cheaply. But why was young Tulak waiting ?

" Finish him, boy ! " ordered Ayug, grinning. " If he lives, there will be bad blood between you. Finish him, I say ! "

Tulak stared. He could not bring himself to kill a man. But even while he hesitated, he saw a frown gathering on Ayug's brow, and the other men began to mutter impatiently. Obviously Ayug was reasoning that if the boy was too chicken-hearted to kill his enemy, then he was a useless recruit for the renegade band and would be better dead !

With despair in his heart, Tulak knew that this must be the end for him. There was silence now, utter and complete. Suddenly—there came a faint, humming drone.

The tension was broken as the Eskimos stared up into the dazzling sky. The drone grew steadily louder, but it was oddly faltering and uneven.

" It is a flying machine of the white men," muttered Ayug, shielding his eyes.

Several times in his life, Tulak had seen the great silver birds in which the white men flew across the ice tundras, but it was rare enough to cause great excitement among the simple Eskimos. Now the outlaws were all pointing and chattering excitedly, and the battle between Tulak and Inouk was forgotten.

Tulak saw Inouk struggle free of the net at last and slink away. Then he turned to watch as the flying machine came in sight over the crest of the ridge. It was very low, and swinging from side to side.

" It is coming down upon us ! " cried Ayug suddenly.

Immediately the Eskimos broke and fled in terror. Tulak was among them, for he feared this strange silver bird more greatly than any knife !

The engines roared, dwindled to silence, then with a coughing snarl they came to life again. Side-slipping dangerously, the plane teetered across the frozen lake, touched down on the surface, bounced judderingly, and finally skidded to a slithering halt in the middle of the ice !

AYUG'S TREACHERY

WARILY, Ayug and his men moved forward across the ice. They did not fear the white men, but they feared that the great silver bird might suddenly come to life again and pounce upon them.

Tulak saw a door in the side of the aircraft open, and a man in thick leather clothes stood there gazing out at the approaching Eskimos.

Lieutenant Sam Parker, of the R.C.A.F. Meteorological Section, kept one hand on the pistol at his belt as he saw the fur-clad Eskimos approaching across the ice. He turned and jerked an order to the five men who made up his crew.

" Keep inside," he said in a quiet, crisp voice, " and have your guns ready. I don't suppose there'll be any trouble, but I'd sooner be safe than sorry."

Sergeant Rankin spoke from his seat at the radio.

" That was a dandy landing you made, skipper, 'specially for one engine ! But I guess that last bounce has smashed some of the valves in our transmitter. There's not a hope of contacting our base ! "

"All right, Sergeant," Lieutenant Sam Parker nodded, and waited in silence as the Eskimos drew near.

The aircraft's base was not far south of the trading post, and in his two years as a flyer for the Met. Section, Sam Parker had picked up a good smattering of the Eskimo tongue.

"Wait!" he called as the Eskimos reached a point within twenty yards of the machine. "Of what tribe are you?"

Ayug stepped forward grinning and leaning on his rifle.

"The Leewajugi tribe, white man," he replied glibly.

Sam Parker felt uneasy. He could see no Eskimo women or children. This did not look like a tribe at all!

"Our machine that flies in the air is hurt," he said, stumbling over the words. "If you will take a message to the nearest trading post, you will be well rewarded."

Tulak, mingling with the crowd, kept his eyes on Ayug. Ayug had lied about the tribe, and Tulak could almost sense the dark thoughts passing through Ayug's mind. To an Eskimo, the silver bird represented enormous treasure! It could be pulled to pieces, and there would be much fine metal for making many things. There would be wire for harpoon-cable. There would be leather and rubber and soft woollen packing—and a hundred and one things the renegade band could use!

There would be guns, too! The white men would surely carry guns. They would be especially useful to Ayug's outlaws!

Ayug scratched his chin.

"To reach the trading post," he said slowly, "there is a full day's march to the Koukuji River, and then three hours by kayak down river. The waters are swollen and dangerous. Why do you not speak with your friends by the little box that sends voices through the air?"

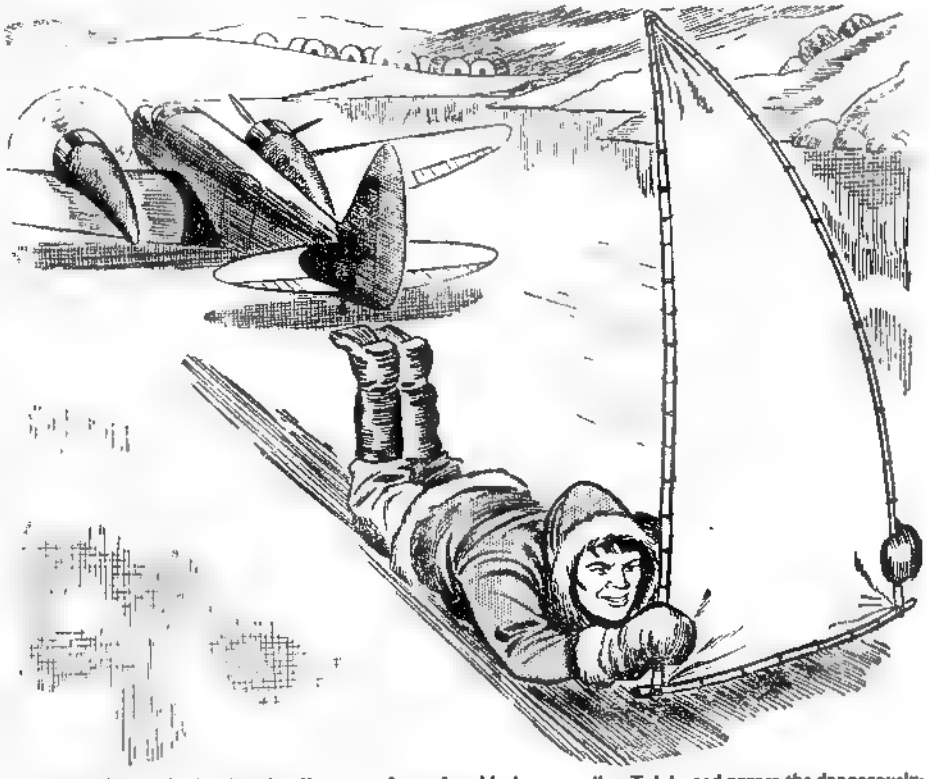
"The little box—the radio—it is broken," said Sam Parker.

Ayug nodded understandingly.

"I will send two men to say that your silver bird is here," he exclaimed. With a gesture of command to his men, he turned and began to move back across the ice towards their encampment. Sam Parker gazed after them, frowning.

When they reached the snowy shore, Ayug called his men around him. His eyes were glittering.

"It is well!" he said. "The white man is afraid of us, and he and his men will be ready with their guns. To attack them while they are in the silver bird would cost many lives. But if we do not take the message, if we wait, then in three days the white men will be very hungry! In time, they will have to leave the silver bird, to ask for food or to hunt food! Then we shall have them! And the silver bird is made up of wonderful riches which shall be ours!"



Holding his improvised sail in the slipstream from the whirring propeller, Tulak sped across the dangerously-thin ice. The daring young Eskimo was risking his life to get help for the stranded airman!

Inside the plane, Sam Parker's thoughts were travelling along the same line. The plane carried no emergency rations. They had been forced far off their route by a storm in the upper air, and the chance of another plane spotting them was very remote. If they left the plane, they would be at the mercy of those villainous looking Eskimos—a band of thugs, he was sure!

With a forced smile he turned to the crew.

"It's all fixed, chaps!" he said. "They'll send some men to the trading post, and fetch help for us. Meantime, I don't want anybody to leave this plane!"

SAILING ON ICE

TULAK had made up his mind to save the white men. Within him there was a growing determination to carry a message to the trading post, a hundred miles to the south. But first he must warn the white men. He must warn them to beware of Ayug!

" How can I get to the silver bird unseen ? " Tulak asked himself, gazing across the lake. " If I move from the encampment towards it, then everybody will see me going across the ice. And if I circle the lake and come to the flying machine from the far end, the ice there will be too thin for me to walk across, even if I were not seen ! "

Tulak squatted in the entrance of the tiny tent of hides that he had rigged up against his battered old sledge. Ayug's men now seemed to be treating him as one of them. His victory over Inouk had made them warm to him. Suddenly he saw Inouk going into his igloo. Inouk wore a parka with a black fur hood, the only one of its kind in the encampment.

" I must watch out for Inouk," Tulak told himself. " He will be eager for revenge."

Then he concentrated on the problem that was on his mind It was half-an-hour later when a sudden gleam came into his eyes.

Nobody took any notice when Tulak wandered idly away towards the ragged ice-ridge bordering the long side of the lake. If he had attempted to take a sledge and team, they would have been after him like wolves. But no man would get far from the camp on foot. A sledge with supplies was needed to carry a man across those terrible icy wastes.

Once out of sight beyond the ridge, Tulak moved swiftly. An hour later he reached the far end of the lake. For some time he was busy with a large, triangular piece of soft hide that he had brought with him wrapped round some spars of wood.

His nimble fingers quickly made a framework of the wood with strong fish-gut, and then he tied the white triangle of hide firmly on to the spars. When he had finished, he held a rough but serviceable sail, about five feet tall. The sail was white, and wouldn't be seen against the snowy background.

Lifting his hand, Tulak gave a grunt of satisfaction as he noted that the wind was still blowing strongly across the lake from directly behind him. Holding the sail in front of him like a shield, he wriggled forward on his stomach and edged warily on to the lake's thin ice.

The wind was catching the sail now, and he could feel its fierce power. It was one thing to walk across thin ice, but if he could move across while stretched out at full length, then the danger of breaking through was many times less !

With one last wriggle, he came clear of the shore, and at once he began to glide slowly forward as the wind behind the sail had its way. The ice was as smooth as glass, and there was no drag to hold him back. Tulak felt himself gathering speed until he was skimming along faster than a man could walk. By turning the sail slightly he could steer in a clumsy way. The base of the sail was held a few inches clear of the ice so that he could peer beneath it, and Tulak could see the tail of the silver bird pointing directly towards him.

For sixty seconds or more he went skimming on. Then, with a quick twist, he turned the sail sideways and brought up with a bump against the plane's tail-skid.

He was on thick ice now, and could rise to his feet with safety, but it was still vital that he should not be seen by the Eskimos in the encampment.

Warily, Tulak clambered on to the body of the silver bird, so that its whole bulk was between him and the encampment.

Edging forward, he reached the door, then stretched down one arm and knocked urgently. A second later the door was flung open, and a man's head and shoulders emerged. In the man's hand was a pistol, and he was gazing from side to side in bewilderment.

" Psst ! White man ! " hissed Tulak. " I am a friend ! I have come to warn you ! "

Lieutenant Sam Parker's head jerked round so that he faced upwards. He saw a young Eskimo gazing down. The boy's eyes were friendly, and instinctively Sam felt that he could be trusted.

" Warn me of what ? " he asked quietly.

" These are Ayug's men ! " said Tulak, nodding towards the encampment. " Very bad ! If you leave flying machine, they will kill you. And Ayug will not take your message to the trading post ! He has not sent the men as he said he would ! "

Sam Parker drew a deep breath.

" Can you trek to the trading post, boy ? " he asked. " We can hold out for three or four days, I guess. Tell them to radio our base to send a military plane to clear off those bandits, and to send a well-armed rescue party overland to bring us in—no, wait ! You won't understand all that. I'll write out the message and sign it ! "

Two minutes later, Tulak was tucking a sheet from a message pad beneath his parka.

" How are you going to get back, boy ? " Sam Parker asked urgently.

" I must go by my sail," said Tulak, pointing. " But now the wind is blowing the wrong way for me. White man—when you came down, the thing that roars and snarls and makes a great wind was not broken ? "

" The port engine's not too bad for a short burst," Sam Parker said in English, his eyes lighting up. Then he checked, and spoke in Tulak's tongue. " I understand you, boy. In two minutes, when you are ready, the machine will start to make a great wind. And there will be some smoke from it, too, which will hide you ! "

Tulak grinned and wriggled back. He lay on the ice with his sail ready. A few seconds later, the big engine coughed, then sprang to life. The propeller spun round, faster and faster.

Thick fumes belched from the exhaust, swelling into a great cloud. Tulak's sail was almost snatched from his grasp by the slipstream, but he clung on desperately. Then he was skimming at terrific speed across the ice towards the far shore.

As he left the plane, the force of the propeller's blast grew less, and the opposing wind began to fight against him. For one panicky moment he thought he would be brought to a dead halt on the thin ice, but—no.

Twenty yards from the shore, he whipped down the sail so that the opposing wind would not stop him, and glided gently on until his fingers drove into the

hard snow bordering the edge of the lake. With a sigh of relief he pulled himself to safety.

Now he must find some way of reaching the distant trading post, and fetching help for the stranded flyers!

THE BATTLE WITH THE GREAT BEAR!

WHEN Tulak reached the outlaw encampment again, he had a few uneasy moments wondering if his absence had aroused any curiosity. But the Eskimos were now going about there usual tasks, fishing through the ice-holes, repairing sledges, sleeping, or just gossiping idly.

Inouk, going into his small igloo, glanced balefully at him, but that was all. Tulak wandered across to where a number of sledges stood on the snow. Most of the huskies were sleeping or eating nearby, but two full teams were standing harnessed in their traces.

One team, he knew, belonged to Inouk. It was a fine, powerful team, and Tulak guessed that Inouk had been out for an hour or two hunting white hare or other small game. At any other time Tulak would have felt angry at a man who left his dogs in harness while he went away to eat or rest, but on this occasion his eyes sparkled with eagerness.

"It is a good, speedy sledge"! he murmured. "And with that team I would quickly reach the Koukuji River!"

Best of all—beside the sledge lay a kayak, the short light canoe of the Eskimos. Tulak eyed it thoughtfully, then turned and began to wander towards the little igloo of Inouk. Choosing a moment when he was unobserved, he ducked swiftly through the low entrance.

Inside, it was gloomy, despite the stone lamp which flickered smokily. Inouk was squatting on the hides which covered the floor. A look of mingled rage and fear crossed his face as he looked up and saw Tulak. Without a word he lunged towards the rifle which lay nearby.

Tulak's wrist jerked, and his long knife hissed through the air. It caught the sleeve of Inouk's parka, driving through it and the hides on the floor into the hard-packed snow below.

His arm trapped by the knife pinning his sleeve to the ground, Inouk was helpless for a few seconds. That was more than enough for Tulak. In a flash he had the rifle in his hands, its muzzle menacing the frightened Inouk.

"Do not move, Inouk!" Tulak said softly. "And do not call out. Then you will be safe! I do not want your life. I want only to borrow something from you!"

It was ten minutes later when a figure emerged from Inouk's igloo, wearing the parka with the distinctive black hood pulled up over the head. The figure moved boldly and without haste towards the sledges. It was Tulak in disguise!

Before the treacherous Inouk could grab his rifle, Tulak's quickly-thrown knife pinned down the sleeve of the outlaw's parka. And it was Inouk's parka that Tulak needed to aid his escape from the encampment!

His face almost hidden by the big hood, Tulak spoke gently to the dogs for a few moments so that they would become used to his voice. Then he bent and lifted the kayak on to the sledge. A few seconds later the sledge was moving, with Tulak loping behind.

"You are in hunting mood to-day, Inouk!" somebody called.

Tulak turned and waved a hand, shouting back in the best imitation of Inouk's voice that he could muster.

Once clear of the camp, he loosed a long sigh of relief. Inouk was securely bound and gagged, lying helpless in his igloo! Tulak wondered how long it would be before his escape was discovered.

"Ayug will send after me," he told himself. "Or perhaps he will come himself, for he will guess what I am going to do! If I can reach the Koukuji and take to the river, he will never catch me. But if I fail—"

He left the thought unfinished, and shouted to the dogs. "Hai-ee! Ala! Keyo!"

For hour after hour, Tulak pressed on across the dazzling snow. The valiant huskies responded to his urging, their tongues lolling as they ran. After four hours he halted so that they might rest, and gave them dried meat to eat.

Then on again, his eyes seeking the line against the horizon which would tell him that the Kuwani Range was near. There he would have to leave the huskies and climb for a mile across icy crags with the kayak on his back, for it was at this point that the Koukuji river split the mountains.

On and on; four hours' driving, half-an-hour's rest. The desert of snow seemed to extend for ever. At midnight, with the sun still clear and bright in the sky, Tulak settled himself to sleep for two hours. But when he woke and glanced at the sun, he gave a start, for the position of the sun told him that four hours had passed since he closed his eyes.

Desperately he sent the huskies driving on again.

Four hours on the trail—half-an-hour's rest.

He was within five miles of the Kuwani Range when he saw the little black smudge on the snow far behind him, and knew instinctively that it was Ayug. So Inouk had been found too soon! The outlaw leader was hard on Tulak's trail!

When Tulak reached the fringe of the Kuwani ridge of rocky hills, Ayug was almost within rifle range. Tulak thought bitterly of the rifle he had left in Inouk's hut. That had been a bad slip, made when all his thoughts were on the sledge and the dog-team he intended taking.

He swung the kayak on to his back, he left the sledge and plunged up a snow-covered slope which led to a twisting gully running between the crags.

After five hundred yards over that treacherous, ragged ground, and Tulak was forced to halt. It was no use going on. Ayug would have him in sight before he reached the river—and that would mean a bullet in the back. Tulak preferred to stay and fight among the crags, where he might ambush his enemy

He clambered up a rugged, ice-covered rock and waited.

And then it came—a sudden spine-chilling, deep-throated snarl, mingled with a hoarse shriek of terror that was cut off short. Tulak hesitated, then began to move warily back down the gully. He did not think it could be a trick. That scream had been too real. But he had to know what had happened to Ayug

He came out into a shallow open basin, and stopped short. Ayug lay on the snow, and Tulak knew at a glance that the outlaw chief would never move again. Over him stood a vast polar bear, head and shoulders taller than any Tulak had ever seen.

"Kral!" croaked Tulak.

All thought of the great white bear he had first set out to hunt had long since been driven from his mind. But this was Kral's haunt—the haunt of the great white bear!

Kral's massive head swung round. He sighted Tulak, and charged. With great loping strides, the huge bear hurtled across the snow, jaws agape and slavering. Tulak felt one moment of blinding panic, and then suddenly he was cool and alert.

This was the moment he had thought about and planned so carefully during the long days when he had been able to feed his family with small scraps of food. This was the moment!

In a flash he had slipped off the parka—Inouk's parka

He held the heavy fur out to one side with both hands. Kral came straight for him, and at the last second Tulak swung to one side. The mighty polar bear collided with the parka, and a moment later his head was enveloped in the heavy folds

Tulak leapt, and came down squarely on the bear's great furry back. His left arm clamped under the thick neck as the bear tried to shake free of the blinding parka. The knife was in Tulak's free hand, and he drove the long blade up under the bear's foreleg—the quickest way to the heart A fearsome bellow of pain and fury broke from Kral.

Tulak struck again, then again and again. The mighty body jerked and bucked beneath him

"Hai-ee!" gasped Tulak, and struck for what he knew must be the last time. Kral seemed to stiffen for a moment, then the bear's huge and muscular frame went slack, and he crumpled to the snow

Tulak rose, panting. There was the light of triumph in his eyes.

"Kral!" he muttered in a choked voice. "I have killed Kral!" It was a thing almost beyond belief!

For a few moments he stood staring down at the polar bear. Then, taking Ayug's fallen rifle, he began to plod slowly towards the point where he had set down his kayak.

Soon he was on the fast-flowing waters which would carry him down to the trading post.

It was many days later when Tulak at last came back to his family. They had given him up for dead, and were in a sad plight for food—but their pinched faces lit up in delight and amazement at what they saw.

Tulak was driving a brand new sledge, drawn by a magnificent team of dogs. He carried a shining new rifle across his back, and there was another on the sledge for his fourteen-year-old brother. But that was not all! The sledge was piled high with stores from the trading post. Tulak's family found themselves suddenly rich!

As the sledge was unloaded, Tulak told his story

"The flying men were saved," he ended, "and many of Ayug's rogues were captured. The rest have scattered, for their leader is dead! The flying men were very grateful, and at their trading post they gave me all these things!"

The sledge was almost unloaded, and Tulak moved towards it.

"But one thing they did not give me," he said proudly. "This, I brought back for myself! I did it alone—with my knife!"

And as his brothers stared wide-eyed, Tulak held up the white pelt of Kral, the great polar bear!

THE SECRET OF JU-JU ISLAND

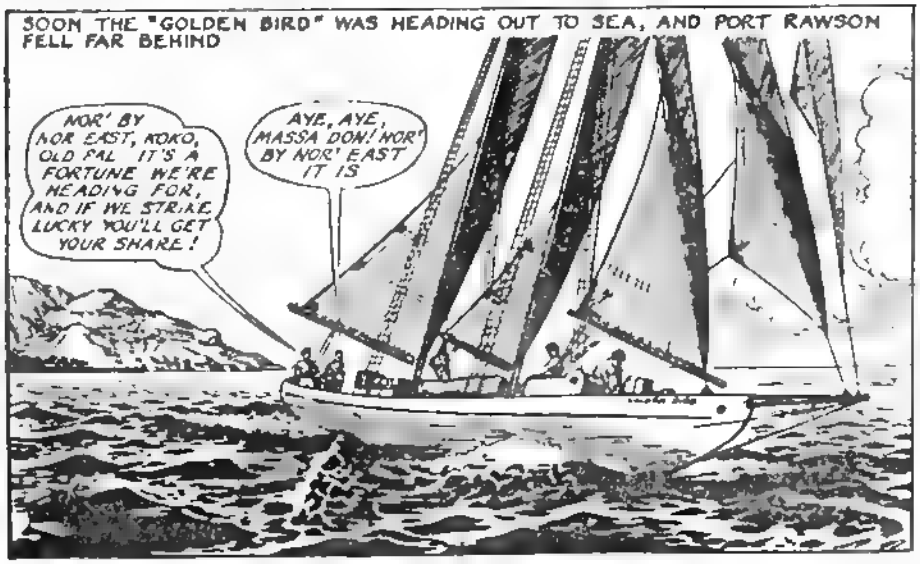
BY ROY LEIGHTON

DON WATSON, OWNER OF THE SCHOONER, "GOLDEN BIRD," WAS A DARING ADVENTURER. WITH HIS FAITHFUL KANAKA HANDYMAN, KOKO, HE SAILED TO PORT RAWSON, IN NORTH AUSTRALIA. THERE HE TOOK ON A CREW OF KANAKA NATIVES TO GO PEARL-DIVING IN THE ISLANDS OFF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

DAT'S DE LAST OF DE STORES GOING ABOARD, MASSA DON
OKAY, KOKO. RECKON WE CAN CAST OFF NOW. THE SOONER WE'RE DIVING FOR THOSE PEARLS THE BETTER

HEARING DON'S WORDS, AN OLD, WEATHER-BEATEN SAILOR HURRIED ACROSS TO HIM
HOLD HARD THERE! ARE YOU THE YOUNG FELLOW WHO AIMS TO GO PEARLING AT JU-JU ISLAND?
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M TOLD IT'S A RICH PEARL-BED. WHY?

THE OLD SAILOR'S FACE BECAME GRIM
TAKE MY TIP, SON, DON'T GO! TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPEN ON THAT ISLAND— THINGS THAT'LL MAKE YOUR BLOOD RUN COLD
THANKS FOR THE ADVICE, MISTER, BUT I'M GAME TO TAKE A RISK


SOON THE "GOLDEN BIRD" WAS HEADING OUT TO SEA, AND PORT RAWSON FELL FAR BEHIND
NOR' BY NOR EAST, KOKO, OLD PAL. IT'S A FORTUNE WE'RE HEADING FOR, AND IF WE STRIKE LUCKY YOU'LL GET YOUR SHARE!
AYE, AYE, MASSA DON! NOR' BY NOR' EAST IT IS

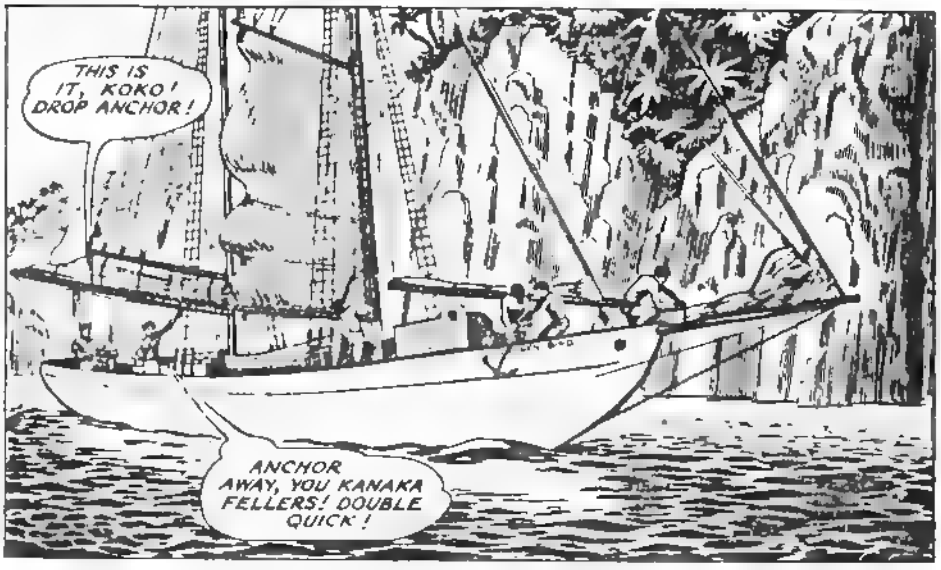
AS THE SCHOONER RACED BEFORE THE STRONG BREEZE, DON PUZZLED OVER THE OLD SAILOR'S WORDS. WHAT HAD HE MEANT BY HIS WARNING? WHAT WAS THERE AT JU-JU ISLAND THAT COULD SCARE SUCH A HARDENED OLD SALT? MAYBE KOKO WOULD KNOW, FROM HEARING NATIVE GOSSIP. DON DECIDED TO QUESTION HIM

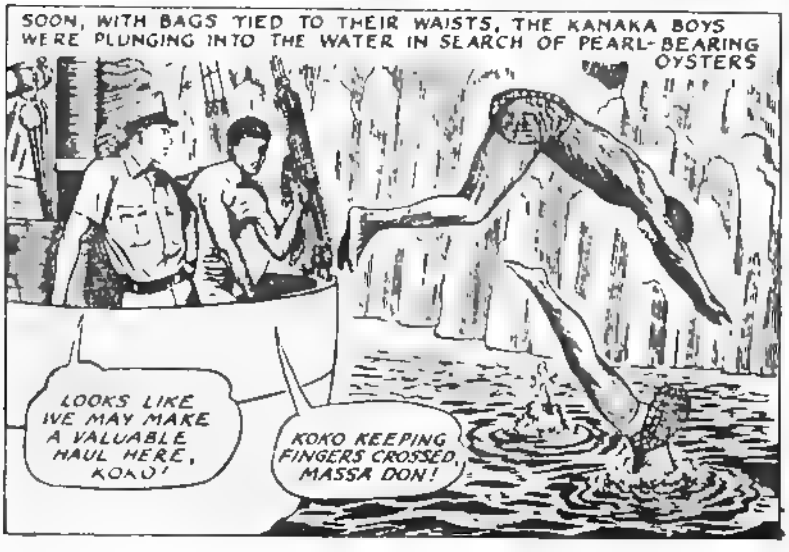
KOKO, DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING OF A PLACE CALLED JU-JU ISLAND ?
JU-JU ISLAND! SURELY YOU NOT WANTING GO THERE, MASSA DON! I HEAR ALL ABOUT IT! NOBODY GO THERE! PLENTY SPIRITS AND WITCHES~~!
JU-JU TALK AND WITCHES ARE A LOT OF NONSENSE. THEY'RE NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF. DON'T SAY YOU'RE FRIGHTENED TO COME THERE WITH ME!
KOKO GO WHERE YOU GO. BUT MASSA SHOULD NOT LET OTHER KANAKA BOYS IN CREW KNOW WE HEADING FOR JU-JU ISLAND. THEY LIABLE DESERT SHIP IN HURRY
THE FOLLOWING MORNING JU-JU ISLAND CAME IN SIGHT
DAT PLENTY BAD PLACE, MASSA DON BLACK BOYS IN PORT RAWSON SAY THOSE WHO GO THERE NEVER COME BACK! CALL IT "ISLAND OF VANISHING MEN!"
WELL, HERE'S ONE MAN WHO DOESN'T MEAN TO VANISH! HEAD STRAIGHT FOR THE ISLAND, KOKO!
THE "GOLDEN BIRD" SOON DROPPED ANCHOR, AND DON WENT ASHORE IN A SMALL BOAT
YOU AND I WILL TAKE A LOOK ROUND FIRST, KOKO
PLACE PLENTY QUIET, MASSA DON I SEE NO PEOPLE ABOUT THAT BAD
THE APPARENTLY-DESERTED ISLAND SEEMED STRANGE- AND SINISTER
GOLLY, MASSA DON. LOOKS LIKE DEMONS HAVE SPIRITED ISLANDERS AWAY. NATIVE HUTS EMPTY AND FALLING APART. AIEE!! SMELL EVIL IN THE AIR
TAKE IT EASY, KOKO! IT'S A QUEER SET-UP ALL RIGHT! BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO STOP US DIVING FOR PEARLS

DON WATSON'S FACE TURNED GRIMMER, HOWEVER, AS HE LOOKED ABOUT HIM WHY HAD THE ISLAND'S INHABITANTS FLED? THERE WAS ABUNDANT FOOD ON THE PALMS AND IN THE JUNGLE! SWIFTLY HE SEARCHED THE ROTTING HUTS FOR A CLUE TO THE MYSTERY, BUT IN VAIN!

UNABLE TO DISCOVER WHY THE JU-JU ISLANDERS HAD LEFT THEIR VILLAGE, DON RETURNED TO THE BOAT
LET'S GET BACK TO THE SHIP, KOKO. WE'LL START PEARLING RIGHT AWAY
OKAY, MASSA DON

SLOWLY THE "GOLDEN BIRD" SAILED ACROSS THE BLUE LAGOON IN SEARCH OF THE OYSTER BEDS THAT SPELT FORTUNE. AND UNDER THE LEE OF A WHITE CORAL CLIFF, DON FOUND THE SPOT HE HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR — A RICH PEARLING-GROUND IN SHELTERED WATER




SOON, WITH BAGS TIED TO THEIR WAISTS, THE KANAKA BOYS WERE PLUNGING INTO THE WATER IN SEARCH OF PEARL-BEARING OYSTERS
LOOKS LIKE IVE MAY MAKE A VALUABLE HAUL HERE, KOKO!
KOKO KEEPING FINGERS CROSSED, MASSA DON!

BUT DON FROWNED ANXIOUSLY AS THE MINUTES TICKED BY AND NONE OF THE KANAKAS REAPPEARED!
SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG!
THEY NO COME UP! MAYBE JU-JU DEMONS GET THEM!

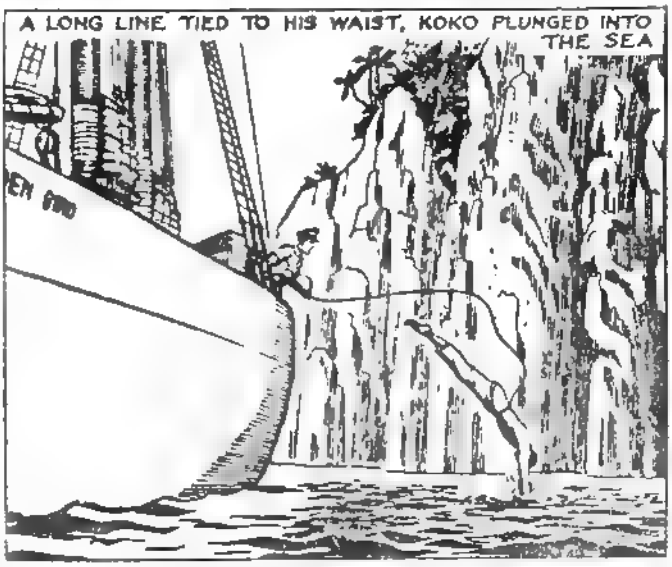
JERKING OFF HIS SHIRT AND CAP, THE YOUNG SKIPPER OF THE "GOLDEN BIRD" DASHED TO THE SHIP'S SIDE
JU-JUS BE HANGED! THE KANAKAS MUST HAVE GOT TANGLED IN WEEDS OR SOMETHING! I'M GOING IN AFTER THEM!
AOKO COME, TOO, BOSS! WHERE YOU GO, I GO!
DESPERATELY DON AND KOKO SCANNED THE BED OF THE LAGOON
THOSE KANAKAS MUST BE DOWN HERE SOMEWHERE. GOT TO FIND THEM QUICK, OR THEY'LL BE DONE FOR. THEY'VE BEEN DOWN NEARLY FIVE MINUTES!
BEFORE LONG DON BEGAN TO LOOK AMAZED AND BEWILDERED
THERE'S NOT A SIGN OF THEM! THEY'VE VANISHED COMPLETELY, BY THUNDER
A COLD CHILL CREPT UP DON'S SPINE
NO WONDER JU-JU ISLAND WAS CALLED "THE ISLAND OF VANISHING MEN"
ALL HIS KANAKA PEARL-DIVERS HAD SUDDENLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED
WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR IT? WHERE HAD THEY BEEN TAKEN--AND BY WHAT OR WHOM?
ALL AT ONCE KOKO GRABBED DON BY THE ARM, AND POINTED EXCITEDLY AT SOMETHING EMBEDDED IN THE SAND
WHAT THE HECK! IT'S A STEEL HARPOON! WONDER IF IT'S GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE KANAKAS?

PLUCKING THE HARPOON FROM THE SEA-BED, DON SHOT TO THE SURFACE
RECKON WE'VE GOT A CLUE HERE, KOKO. LET'S GET ABOARD AND EXAMINE IT
ONCE BACK ON THE SHIP, THE FEARLESS YOUNG SKIPPER PEERED CLOSELY AT THE HARPOON
H'M! IT'S CLEAN AND FRESHLY OILED. THAT MEANS IT HADN'T BEEN THERE LONG. AND THE ARROW IT'S LINKED WITH THIS MYSTERY SURE ENOUGH!
WHAT WE DO NOW, MASSA DON?
IT'S GETTING DARK, KOKO. WE CAN'T MAKE A MOVE TILL DAYLIGHT BUT WE'D BETTER ALL BUNK DOWN THROUGH THE NIGHT, TOO. MASS ANDY, YOU TAKE FIRST WATCH WHILE I GET SOME SHUTEYE
AYE, AYE, MASSA DON!
AN HOUR LATER, DON'S SLEEP WAS BROKEN BY A FRANTIC SHAKING!
MASSA! MASSA DON! COME QUICK!
UH? WHAT IS IT, KOKO? WHAT'S UP?
TERROR IN HIS EYES, THE KANAKA LED DON TO THE STERN
AEE, SEE, BOSS! EVIL JU OF THE SEA! IT COME FOR US! WE ARE DOOMED!
WHAT THE- WHAT THE HECK IS IT?
ALONGSIDE THE SHIP, GLOWING WEIRDLY WITH PHOSPHORESCENT LIGHT, A SHIMMERING FIGURE GLIDED UNDERWATER

GRIMLY DON GRABBED HIS AUTOMATIC AND FIRED!
NO CAN KILL EVIL SPIRIT, MASSA DON!
THAT'S NO EVIL SPIRIT! THIS IS A TRICK OF SOME KIND TO SCARE US. IT MUST BE A MAN. BUT THESE BULLETS WILL SCARE HIM OFF!

IT MUST BE EVIL SPIRIT, MASSA DON. MAN COULD NOT STAY UNDERWATER SO LONG!
A MAN I'M THINKING OF COULD, KOKO. AND HE COULD HAVE KIDNAPPED OUR KANAKAS. NOW YOU GO AND GET SOME SLEEP. WE'VE A MIGHTY BUSY DAY TO-MORROW

NEXT MORNING DON PUT INTO OPERATION HIS PLAN TO CATCH THE EVIL UNDERWATER "SPIRIT"
YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY BAIT, KOKO - BUT DON'T WORRY. A TUG ON THIS LINE WILL BRING ME DOWN DOUBLE-QUICK. THAT "SPIRIT'S" GOING TO BE IN REAL BAD SPIRITS BY THE TIME I'VE FINISHED WITH HIM
KOKO SCARED - BUT TRUST MASSA DON


A LONG LINE TIED TO HIS WAIST, KOKO PLUNGED INTO THE SEA

KOKO REACHED THE SEA-BED - THEN SWUNG AROUND WITH A GASP OF HORROR
AIEE! THE JU-JU OF THE DEEP!

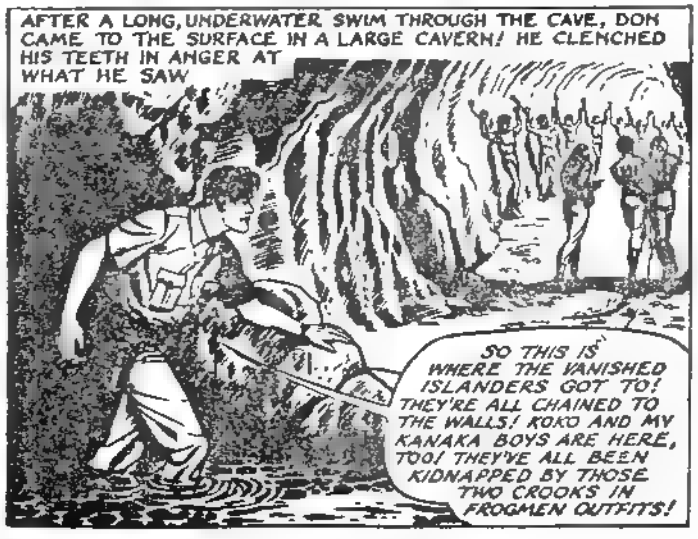
A TERRIFYING FIGURE SHOT FROM A NEARBY CAVE-MOUTH, A DEADLY HARPOON-GUN IN ITS GRASP. A SECOND WEIRD FIGURE FOLLOWED CLOSELY. KOKO LITTLE KNEW THAT THEY WERE BOTH MEN, CLAD IN FROGMEN SUITS!

MENACED BY THE GLEAMING HARPOON-GUN, THE WIDE-EYED KOKO WAS DRAGGED TO THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE. NEITHER FROGMAN NOTICED THE THIN LINE WHICH TRAILED FROM THE KANAKA'S WAIST

UP ON THE "GOLDEN BIRD," THE LINE SHOT THROUGH DON'S FINGERS WITH A VIOLENT JERK!
ZERO HOUR! NOW FOR IT!

BUCKLING ON A REVOLVER, THE YOUNG SKIPPER TOOK A HEADER OVERBOARD
IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO GOOD OLD KOKO, I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF! BUT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF MY VANISHED PEARL DIVERS!

SKILFULLY DON FOLLOWED THE LINE INTO THE CAVE. BUT UNKNOWN TO HIM, HIS REVOLVER FELL FROM ITS HOLSTER!
SO THIS IS WHERE KOKO'S BEEN TAKEN. I'D BETTER KEEP MY EYES SKINNED FOR TROUBLE

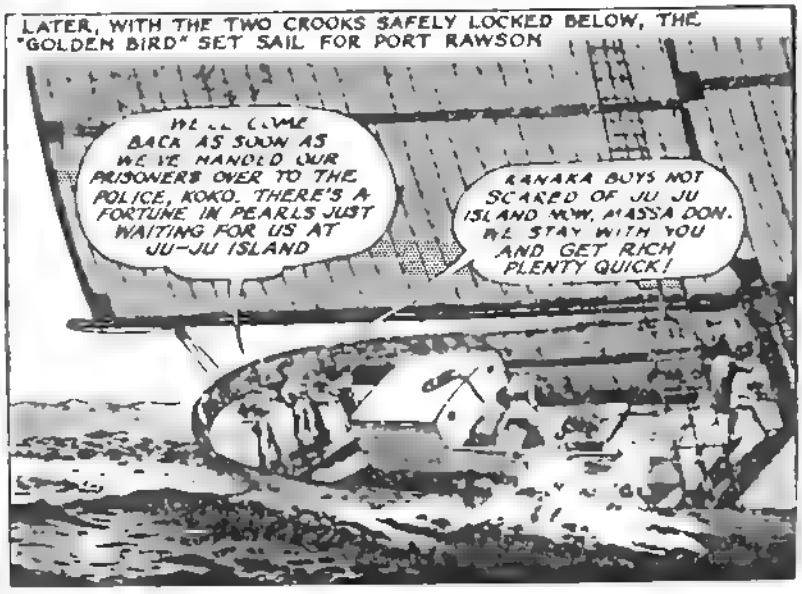

AFTER A LONG, UNDERWATER SWIM THROUGH THE CAVE, DON CAME TO THE SURFACE IN A LARGE CAVERN! HE CLENCHED HIS TEETH IN ANGER AT WHAT HE SAW
SO THIS IS WHERE THE VANISHED ISLANDERS GOT TO! THEY'RE ALL CHAINED TO THE WALLS! KOKO AND MY KANAKA BOYS ARE HERE, TOO! THEY'VE ALL BEEN KIDNAPPED BY THOSE TWO CROOKS IN FROGMEN OUTFITS!

DON STEPPED INTO THE CAVERN INSTANTLY A FROGMAN WITH A HARPOON-GUN SPUN ROUND ON HIM. DON'S HAND FLASHED TO HIS REVOLVER HOLSTER -- BUT, TO HIS DISMAY, HE FOUND THAT IT WAS EMPTY!

LIKE A STREAK OF LIGHTNING, THE YOUNG SKIPPER OF THE "GOLDEN BIRD" HURLED HIMSELF FORWARD
NO, MASSA DON! BACK! BACK -- OR JU-JU WILL KILL YOU!

DON GRABBED THE HARPOON-GUN, COVERED THE TWO CROOKS, AND FORCED THEM TO REMOVE THEIR MASKS
THERE ARE YOUR PRECIOUS EVIL SPIRITS, KOKO. NOW SET THE ISLANDERS AND OUR KANAKAS FREE FROM THE R CHAINS WE'RE TAKING THESE TWO BEAUTIES BACK TO PORT RAWSON -- IN IRONS!

SO YOU CROOKS HIT ON THE IDEA OF MAKING THE JU-JU ISLANDERS VANISH, AND THUS GETTING THE PLACE A SINISTER REPUTATION. YOU WANTED THE PEARL-BEDS TO YOURSELVES. WELL, FROM NOW ON THEY'RE FREE TO ANYONE -- BUT


LATER, WITH THE TWO CROOKS SAFELY LOCKED BELOW, THE "GOLDEN BIRD" SET SAIL FOR PORT RAWSON
WE'LL COME BACK AS SOON AS WE'VE HANDED OUR PRISONERS OVER TO THE POLICE, KOKO. THERE'S A FORTUNE IN PEARLS JUST WAITING FOR US AT JU-JU ISLAND
KANAKA BOYS NOT SCARED OF JU JU ISLAND NOW, MASSA DON. WE STAY WITH YOU AND GET RICH PLENTY QUICK!

MIKE MERLIN— MASTER of MAGIC!

THE MOUSE-TRAP THAT CAUGHT A MASTER

By Michael Fox

"BOY!"

Mr. Smollett was only a new master at St. Kitt's—but already the mere sound of his rasping voice was enough to make the lads of the Fourth Form shake in their shoes. Mr Smollett knew how to keep order especially when he saw a boy unconcernedly playing with a ping-pong ball in class, instead of learning history.

"Boy! What is your name?"

The Fourth quaked That question, as they had quickly learned, was usually asked before the new master handed out a stiff dose of 'lines'

Mike Merlin swiftly closed his fist over the ping-pong ball he had been bouncing on his desk lid.

"Merlin, sir," he answered.

"Very well, Merlin! Give me that ball!"

Mike looked puzzled.

"Ball, sir?"

"Yes, boy. Ball! The table tennis ball you have just concealed in your right hand!"

Mike, looking indignant, held his right hand up for inspection It was empty But at the same time he made a great show of bunching the fingers of his left hand together.

"Merlin, do not try me too far!" snapped the irate master. "Doubtless you have transferred the ball to your other hand. Hold up your left hand, Merlin!"

Mike held up his left hand. There was nothing in it!

The Fourth chuckled. Mr. Smollett glared, rose from his seat, realised that he might make a fool of himself over a ball that had apparently vanished, and then sat down again.

"Get on with your work," he snapped.

The Fourth pretended to return to the history books. But all eyes were on Mike Merlin.

Buster Brown, Mike's closest chum, nudged Glasses Gregson, Mike's other close pal.

"This is going to be good!" he grinned.

"Rather!" whispered Glasses. "He's got Smollett riled already. About time someone took it out of the old dragon. Corks—look what Mike's doing now!"

For Mike Merlin was now casually throwing *two* ping-pong balls in the air, tossing them from one hand to the other.

"Boy!"

When the Conjuring Schoolboy Gives a Turn, You Never Know What'll Happen Next!

Mike's two chums saw him palm one ball in each hand at the first bellow of rage from the annoyed master.

"Now, Merlin, kindly do not attempt to quibble this time!" rasped Mr. Smollett. "Hold up both your hands!"

Mike spread both his palms innocently.

There was nothing in either of them!

The Fourth gurgled. Glasses dug Buster in the ribs.

"Look out for fireworks," he whispered.

But Mr. Smollett, although he looked more baffled and furious than ever, decided to give Mike the benefit of the doubt.

"Gosh!" snorted Buster. "Mike's got away with it again!"

But the Fourth's live-wire hadn't. A moment later Mr. Smollett looked up.

"Merlin!" he exploded.

"Yes, sir?"

"I distinctly saw you juggling with three ping-pong balls! Do not attempt to deceive me! I saw you put three balls in your school cap just now. Fetch your cap here."

Mike meekly took his cap from the corner of his desk and walked up to the master with it. He held it out.

Mr. Smollett dived his hand in. Then—snap! Suddenly he leapt back with a howl of rage and pain.

"YOWWWWWWWW!"

As Mr. Smollett withdrew his hand from the cap there was a mouse-trap firmly attached to his fingers!

"Yowwwww! Do something! Get it off!" he howled.

But nobody tried to relieve the angry and surprised master. He roared—but the Fourth roared louder. Buster Brown lay across his desk, helpless with laughter. Glasses Gregson wiped his spectacles and spluttered helplessly

Almost blue with rage, Mr. Smollett pulled the mouse-trap from his fingers. Mike stammered his apologies.

"I'm terribly sorry, sir. I just happened to be keeping that mouse-trap in my school cap. I didn't dream you'd want to put your hand in it!"

Mr. Smollett kept his temper with difficulty.

"Merlin! Were you or were you not playing with three ping-pong balls?"

Now that the question had been put directly to him, Mike could not wriggle out of it.

"Yes, sir," he admitted regretfully.

"Then where are they? I distinctly saw you put them in your cap. And yet they are not there!"

"No, sir. They're here!" Mike cried, reaching into the master's gown and plucking something from the folds. "But you were mistaken about the number of ping-pong balls, sir!"

And Mike held up not three—but six—ping-pong balls!

Every boy in the Fourth almost collapsed with laughter. For Mike Merlin had once again pulled off one of his famous conjuring tricks.

Mike was the conjuring schoolboy of St. Kitt's—but he'd made certain that none of the masters knew how good he was. He could change a mortar-board into a dunce's cap with almost a flick of his wrist Of course, it was really all a question of "the quickness of the hand deceives the eye."

"Silence! Silence!" roared Mr. Smollett, cutting into the Fourth's riotous laughter. "I see that I have been the victim of a stupid practical joke! Very well, Merlin, I shall punish you severely. You will stay in during to-day's half-holiday and write an imposition which I shall set you."

The master's wrathful eye roved round the room. He saw Glasses and Buster still in the throes of uncontrollable laughter.

"And you two, since you have so much to laugh about, will do the same!"

Then, as the break bell went, the master swept out of the room.

Buster Brown strolled across to Mike, wiping his eyes.

"Well, I think it was worth it! Did you see the rotter jump when he grabbed that mouse-trap! He almost broke a record."

"I'd give anything to have a movie film of that performance!" said Glasses. "I think it was worth being kept in this afternoon, too."

"Well, I don't!" snorted Mike, whose face had fallen. "Have you two forgotten what we're supposed to be doing!"

"Corks! The boy's club concert! I'd completely forgotten!" groaned Buster.

For that afternoon Mike was due to appear under his stage name, the Great Zeppo, at a matinee concert in the town in aid of funds for the local boys' club. Buster and Glasses had to be there, too, to help him with his conjuring act. And now all three pals had been ordered to remain in school!

"Gosh, what a shame!" said Glasses. "Most masters let you go with a telling off."

"I know, and that's what I was relying on, otherwise I shouldn't have played my trick," said Mike. "I should have known that Smollett would keep me in. But we can't let the boys' club down, you know. There's only one thing for it. Are you two game to cut detention and risk Smollett not spotting we've gone?"

"You bet!" Mike's two chums chorussed.

"Right! Come on, I'll go and get my equipment ready."

But at that moment Mr. Smollett was turning over the pages of the local newspaper in his study. He was looking for some light entertainment to while away the afternoon.

His eye caught the notice: "Grand concert this afternoon. In aid of boys' club funds."

"H'm!" murmured Mr. Smollett. "I think that should be good. I'll go and see it!"

If Mike Merlin had known this, as he and his pals set off from school that afternoon, he'd have been looking worried instead of wearing a huge smile!

MIKE'S NEW ASSISTANT!

"CRUMBS! What a crowd!"

Anyone in the big audience that had come to watch the concert, who knew Buster Brown or Glasses Gregson, would not have recognised them now. As Mike's assistants they had donned flowing Chinese robes, and had their faces heavily made up.

Only their schoolboy expressions gave them away, as they peered out at the audience from between the gap in the closed curtains.

"Gee whiz! It is a crowd, isn't—" Buster's voice trailed off suddenly. He turned, wide-eyed, to his pal.

"What's up?" asked Glasses.

Buster nodded dumbly in the direction of the front row.

"Corks!" gasped Glasses. "Mr. Smollett!"

Mr. Smollett, who had been idly reading his programme, looked up to see two weird Chinese figures gaping at him between the curtains.

"Good gracious!" he gasped.

"Gosh," gulped Buster. "What are we going to do now?"

"I don't know," Glasses said. "He won't recognise us in this get-up, but he's sure to recognise Mike. It's a good job we popped out to see what the audience was like. Come on—we'd better warn Mike."

The two chums burst into Mike's dressing-room.

"Mr. Smollett's in the audience!" cried Buster.

Mike's face fell.

"Golly, now we're in a jam!" he groaned. "If Smollett sees me, I'll really be for the high jump. Lucky for you two he won't recognise you!"

At that moment a call boy dashed in.

"Curtain's going up, Mike!" he cried.

And Mike was the first act!

"You can't go on!" gasped Buster.

"We'll tell them you're ill!" cut in Glasses.

Mike gritted his teeth.

"The show must go on, whatever happens," he said. He bit his lip for a second. Then his face brightened, and he snapped his fingers. "Got it!" he shouted.

Then rapidly he explained his last-minute idea.

A moment later the curtain went up. The compere announced: "The Great Zeppo!" and on walked Buster in his Chinese get-up.

There was a buzz of curiosity from the audience. Buster held up his hand.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he cried. "Before the Great Zeppo starts his performance tonight he would like the assistance of a gentleman in the audience. The Great Zeppo would like a tall gentleman with black hair, a moustache and horn rimmed spectacles to step up on to the platform. Is there any gentleman here answering to that description?"

There was only one man in audience who was tall and had black hair, a moustache and horn-rimmed spectacles. That was—Mr. Smollett.

His neighbours on the front row nudged him. Mr. Smollett, red with embarrassment, shook his head, and tried to hide behind his programme.

But he was not getting away with it. For Glasses was now standing in the aisle and had taken him by the arm! Willing hands pushed Mr Smollett to his feet.

"No! No! Really! I protest!" yelped Mr. Smollett.

Dismay on their faces, Mike's two pals burst into his dressing-room. "Mr. Smollett's in the audience!" one of them announced. The Fourth-Form magician gasped. This was something he hadn't bargained for!

But his protests were to no avail. Before he knew what was happening, Mr. Smollett was standing on the stage between Buster and Glasses.

"Now, sir," said Buster, speaking in the sing-song oriental voice that he had adopted so that Mr. Smollett would not guess who was speaking. "Will you kindly step this way?"

Behind Mr Smollett was a large wardrobe-like cabinet with two compartments. The door of one was open. And it was towards this door that Buster was beckoning Mr Smollett!

The master stepped back.

"No! I decline! No, most certainly not! This is going too far! This is—here, let me go! Let me go!"

For his two "Chinese" captors had bundled him, still protesting, into the cabinet! Slam! The door was shut behind him.

Then on to the stage walked Mike Merlin, who had been waiting in the wings.

He walked straight across to the cabinet where Mr. Smollett was imprisoned—and turned the key!

The audience rocked with laughter. They thought it was part of the show! Under cover of the noise Mike whispered to Buster:

"I hope we can keep Smollett in there! It'll be all up if he spots who's locked him in!"

"Let me out! Let me out! I protest! This is an outrage!" roared Mr. Smollett from inside the cabinet.

But the more he ranted and raved the more the audience laughed

Meanwhile, Mike got down to conjuring. As Mr. Smollett raged in muffled tones in the cabinet, Mike did one clever trick after another.

First he produced a rabbit, then a dove, and finally a sizzling fried egg from the top hat he always used in his act. Then he produced lighted matches apparently from Buster's ears, and a Union Jack from Glasses' mouth. He did card tricks and rope tricks and handkerchief tricks. The audience lapped it up.

And all the time Mr. Smollet was banging one door of the cabinet and roaring: "Let me out! Let me out, I say! Do you hear!" The audience enjoyed that, too. They thought Smollett was Mike's "stooge"!

At length it was time for one of the highlights in Mike's show. In this, Buster and Glasses would suddenly change from Chinamen into Red Indians with full head-dress, war paint and everything.

It was a quick-change act which Mike had worked out and which he was very proud of. The two chums had make-up sticks, with which to put on their war paint, and the rest of their costume was concealed in the loose Chinese robes.

But to this act Mike needed the use of the two compartments for his two assistants to do their quick-change in. And one of the compartments was occupied by Mr. Smollett!

Mike made a decision.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he said. "As one of my quick-change compartments is already tenanted—" The audience hooted with laughter. "—only one of my assistants will be changed into a Red Indian this afternoon!"

He bowed, and waved Buster into the compartment next to Mr. Smollett's.

"Let me out!" shouted Mr. Smollett as he heard activity in the next compartment. "Someone shall pay for this! Let me out!"

"No fear!" muttered Mike as he turned the key on Buster. "Serve you right, anyway. You've kept us in often enough."

Mike waved his magician's wand in the air.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen—voila! I open the door—and out steps a Red Indian!"

He stepped back and turned the key of the compartment behind him. The door opened and someone charged out

He was red in the face all right. But it was not a Red Indian!

It was Mr. Smollett!

Mike had unlocked the wrong compartment by mistake! What would happen now?

HE IMPERSONATED HIMSELF

IT was a moment for action.

Quick as a flash Mike jumped into the compartment that Mr. Smollet had stepped from. Without being recognised he locked the door on the inside.

Mr. Smollett angrily hopped from one foot to the other, banging on the door of the compartment—this time from the outside!

Inside the next compartment, Buster, who had guessed what had happened, whispered through the thin partition dividing the two compartments: "What are you going to do now, Mike?"

"Keep the show going! That's the first thing!" muttered Mike.

Aloud he shouted to Mr. Smollett.

"Well, sir, I suppose you'd like to get your revenge on me, wouldn't you?" he asked.

Mr. Smollett, almost choking with anger, shouted: "I'd like to wring your neck!"

"Very well then," said Mike. "If you will kindly assist me a little more we will see if you can't get your revenge. Now, sir, on the little table by your side you will see a pack of cards. Will you kindly pick one out and show it the audience?"

"No, I will not pick one out!" snapped Mr. Smollett. But he had little choice. Glasses, who was still on the stage, was already pushing him towards the pack of cards. And the audience was shouting: "Go on! Don't be a spoilsport!"

"Oh, very well!" snorted Mr. Smollett. "But you will pay for this later, whoever you may be!"

He took a card from the pack on the table and held it up.

"Is it the three of hearts?" asked Mike from inside the cabinet.

It was! The audience cheered. Even Mr. Smollett looked slightly puzzled.

Little did he know that every card in that pack was the three of hearts! And that Mike was only killing time while he hatched another plan to keep his identity from the master!

A moment later Mike called: "Now, sir. Would you be good enough to turn the key of my companion's compartment and let him out? I believe he needs some air."

Mr. Smollett, prompted by Glasses, grumpily opened Buster's compartment. The "Chinaman" stepped out.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he said. "While my colleague is—er—indisposed, he has asked me to carry on with the act."

Glasses frowned. It was not like Mike to let down his audience by letting a substitute perform for him. No substitute—not even Buster— could be as good as Mike. Besides, Buster was supposed to step out of the cabinet wearing Red Indian dress!

But a moment later, both Glasses and the audience were gasping in surprise at the antics of the "Chinaman" who was entertaining them. He seemed to be even better than Mike! From mid-air he produced paper streamers, flags and even a bowl of goldfish. He did card tricks that left everyone mystified.

The audience yelled their appreciation. But the substitute conjurer had not finished. Waving his hand he suddenly produced, as if from nowhere, a huge syphon of soda-water.

Mr. Smollett, who had been standing by, fuming, goggled in amazement. He did not goggle for long. For a sudden squirt from the soda syphon caught him full between the eyes!

"This is too much!" roared Mr. Smollett, hopping mad by now, and wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. "You have gone too far! You shall pay for this!"

"Very well, sir," said the "Chinaman." "No doubt you would like to interview our conjurer friend about it!"

Mr. Smollett's eyes gleamed.

"If I could only get my hands on him—" he gritted.

"Very well, sir, you shall. You shall join him in his cabinet."

Mr. Smollett and the "Chinaman" walked forward to the compartment where Mike had imprisoned himself. The substitute conjurer unlocked the door and opened it.

But the compartment was empty! Mike had vanished.

Mr. Smollett turned round.

"What does this mean?"

Then slam! It was the work of a second. Before he knew what was happening to him, Mr. Smollett was bundled back into the compartment and the key was turned on him again!

The audience roared their applause. The "Chinaman" bowed.

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. And just in case you wonder what has happened to the Great Zeppo—"

He then opened the door of the second cabinet!

And out stepped—Buster! In Red Indian dress!

The audience gasped. Then who could the "Chinaman" be?

The "Chinaman" suddenly stepped forward and wiped off his make-up.

It was Mike! He had been substituting for himself!

As the audience cheered, Mike rapidly explained things to the mystified Glasses.

"I open the door—and out steps a Red Indian!" cried Mike. But he'd opened the wrong door by mistake, and it was a red-faced Mr. Smollett who strode angrily from the cabinet. Now there'd be ructions!

"As you know, those two compartments have a secret connecting door. All I did was to crawl into Buster's cabinet and slip on his Chinese costume."

"But where was Buster when you stepped out of the cabinet?" asked Glasses.

"He popped into the other compartment, then came back as soon as I was on the stage," explained Mike. "That's how we managed to keep the compartment free for Smollett again!"

At that moment the manager of the boys' club walked on to the stage, as the curtain was rung down.

"Congratulations, Mike!" he said. "The audience are so pleased with your extra bit of entertainment that they're passing the hat round. We shall get pounds more than we expected for the boys' club funds."

"Good!" said Mike. Then, as he heard Mr. Smollett banging furiously on the door of his cabinet, he said anxiously: "Look, do me a favour, will you? Keep Mr. Smollett here until we're back at school safely doing our lines!"

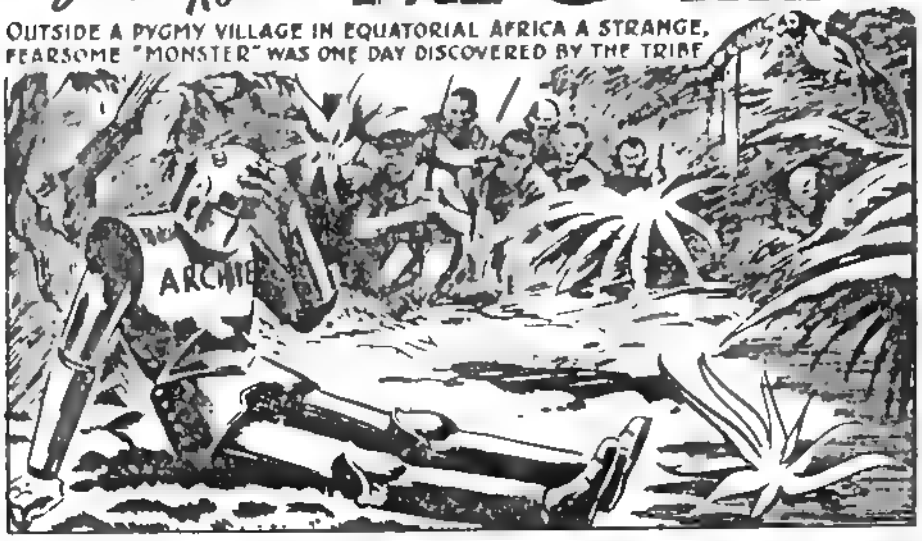
"I will!" smiled the manager. "And if he happens to guess who's been playing hide-and-seek with him, I'll explain how much money he's made with his performance!"

The manager was as good as his word. The next day the three chums got sour and suspicious glances from Mr. Smollett. But he never asked for their lines!

The Jungle Robot — PAL O' THE PYGMIES

BY E. GEORGE COWAN

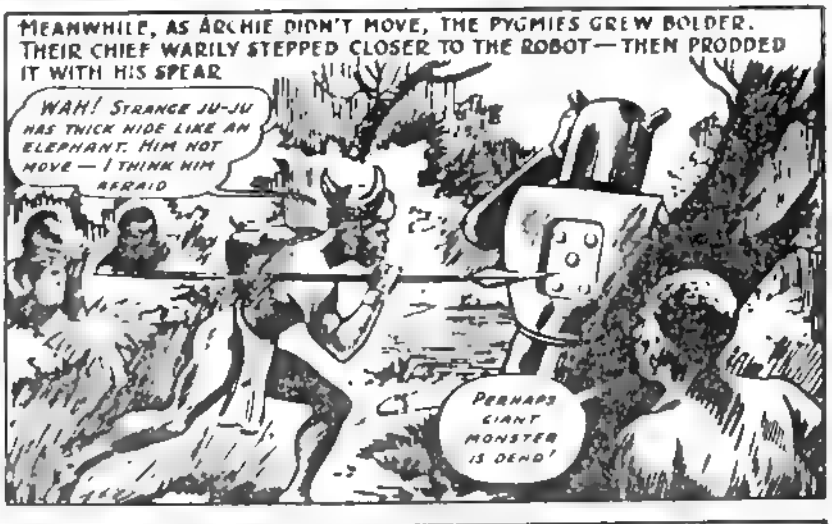
OUTSIDE A PYGMY VILLAGE IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA A STRANGE, FEARSOME "MONSTER" WAS ONE DAY DISCOVERED BY THE TRIBE



THE "MONSTER" WAS A WONDERFUL MECHANICAL MAN — A SUPER-HUMAN ROBOT. IT BELONGED TO TWO YOUNG EXPLORERS, TED RITCHIE AND KEN DALE. THEY CALLED IT ARCHIE, AND IT HAD ACCOMPANIED THEM ON AN EXPEDITION INTO THE JUNGLE. NORMALLY IT OBEYED SIGNALS TRANSMITTED BY TED ON A RADIO SET WHICH HE WORE HUNG ROUND HIS NECK. BUT SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG WITH ARCHIE'S WORKS AND THE ROBOT HAD BOLTED. NOW IT WAS LOST!

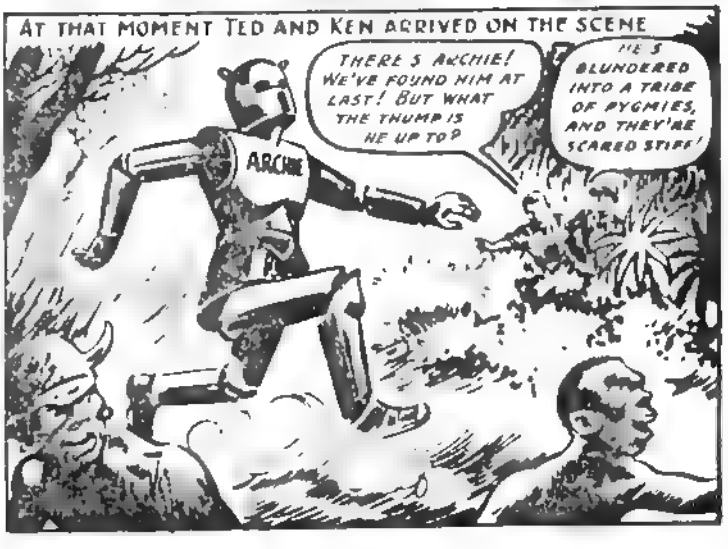
TED AND KEN WEREN'T FAR AWAY. ANXIOUS TO RECOVER THEIR ROBOT, THEY WERE FOLLOWING THE TRACKS IT HAD LEFT

MEANWHILE, AS ARCHIE DIDN'T MOVE, THE PYGMIES GREW BOLDER. THEIR CHIEF WARILY STEPPED CLOSER TO THE ROBOT — THEN PRODDED IT WITH HIS SPEAR



SUDDENLY THE SPEAR-HEAD TOUCHED A SWITCH ON ARCHIE'S CONTROL PANEL. IN A FLASH THE GREAT ROBOT SEEMED TO COME TO LIFE. WAVING ITS ARMS, IT STARTED TO RUN ROUND IN CIRCLES

AT THAT MOMENT TED AND KEN ARRIVED ON THE SCENE

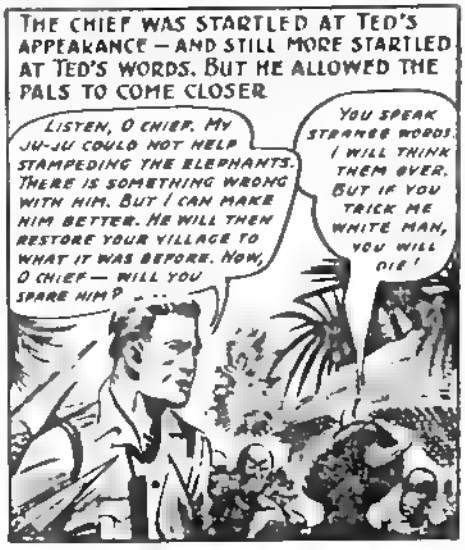

ARCHIE
THERE'S ARCHIE! WE'VE FOUND HIM AT LAST! BUT WHAT THE THUMP IS HE UP TO?
HE'S BLUNDERED INTO A TRIBE OF PYGMIES, AND THEY'RE SCARED STIFF!

AS TED AND KEN DASHED FORWARD TO TRY TO CAPTURE THE ROBOT ARCHIE WENT GALLOPING STRAIGHT TOWARDS A HERD OF ELEPHANTS WHICH WERE FEEDING NEAR THE VILLAGE
KEEP GOING, KEN! IF HE REACHES THOSE ELEPHANTS HE MAY START A STAMPEDE!
THE LEADER OF THE HERD GAVE A SQUEAL OF ALARM
EEEEEE!
BEFORE THE PAIR COULD CAPTURE ARCHIE, THE WHOLE HERD TOOK FRIGHT, BELLOWING WITH FEAR, THEY THUNDERED STRAIGHT INTO THE PYGMY VILLAGE. HUTS WERE SMASHED TO SMITHEREENS
PHEW! THIS IS SERIOUS, TED. I RECKON THOSE ELEPHANTS WILL MAKE A MESS OF THE
AND THE PIGMIES WILL BLAME US IF THEY KNOW THAT ARCHIE IS OURS! WE'D BETTER STAY IN HIDING FOR A BIT
WHILE TED AND KEN WATCHED, THE ROBOT FELL FULL LENGTH – AND LAY STILL. BY THEN, THE ELEPHANTS WERE VANISHING INTO THE DISTANCE. GRIMLY THE PIGMIES ADVANCED UPON ARCHIE
THE PIGMIES ARE OUT FOR REVENGE – AND YOU CAN HARDLY BLAME 'EM
THAT'S ALL VERY WELL, BUT WE DON'T WANT 'EM TO DESTROY OUR ROBOT!
THE PYGMY CHIEF SEETHED WITH ANGER
THE BIG JU-JU LIES HELPLESS, AND THE MAN WHO DROVE THE ELEPHANTS INTO OUR VILLAGE HE SHALL DIE! SEIZE HIM!

THE PYGMY WARRIORS SURROUNDED THE GREAT ROBOT, BOUND IT WITH ROPE-LIKE VINES, AND STARTED TO DRAG IT TOWARDS THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE
GATHER WOOD! THE MIGHTY DEMON SHALL DIE SLOWLY BY FIRE!
WAH! BURN THE JU-JU!
EVEN HIS THICK HIDE WILL NOT KEEP OUT FLAMES!

TED AND KEN WERE HORRIFIED
I'M NOT STANDING FOR THIS ARCHIE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS DOING, FOR HE'S ONLY A MACHINE. BUT HE'S WORTH A FORTUNE TO US! I THINK I KNOW A WAY IN WHICH HE CAN SAVE HIS OWN BACON!

TED HAD NO TIME TO EXPLAIN HIS PLAN. REGARDLESS OF THE PYGMIES' BLOW-PIPES AND BOWS AND ARROWS, HE STRODE FORWARD, ONE ARM RAISED IN GREETING
STOP, O CHIEF OF THE PYGMIES! DO NOT BURN THE JU-JU. HE IS FULL OF MIGHTY MAGIC. I AM HIS MASTER, AND I CAN MAKE HIM BUILD NEW HUTS FOR YOU TO REPLACE THOSE WHICH HAVE BEEN DESTROYED
ARCHIE

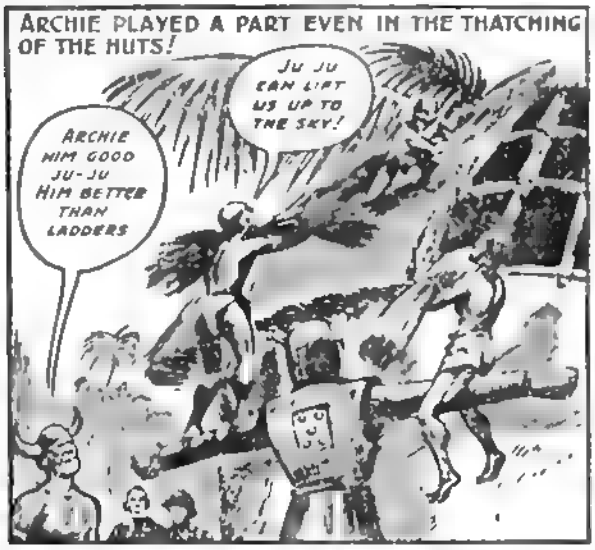

THE CHIEF WAS STARTLED AT TED'S APPEARANCE — AND STILL MORE STARTLED AT TED'S WORDS. BUT HE ALLOWED THE PALS TO COME CLOSER
LISTEN, O CHIEF. MY JU-JU COULD NOT HELP STAMPEDING THE ELEPHANTS. THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM. BUT I CAN MAKE HIM BETTER. HE WILL THEN RESTORE YOUR VILLAGE TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE. NOW, O CHIEF — WILL YOU SPARE HIM? . . .
YOU SPEAK STRANGE WORDS. I WILL THINK THEM OVER. BUT IF YOU TRICK ME WHITE MAN, YOU WILL DIE!

AFTER A LONG DISCUSSION WITH HIS TRIBESMEN, THE CHIEF AGREED TO TED'S SUGGESTION. BUT HE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR TO THEM THAT IF ARCHIE FAILED, NOT ONLY WOULD THE ROBOT BE DESTROYED, — BUT THE PALS WOULD DIE, TOO! TED AND KEN AT ONCE INSPECTED ARCHIE'S MECHANISM, FOUND THE FAULTY PART, AND REPAIRED IT

TED THEN STOOD UP AND PRESSED CERTAIN BUTTONS ON THE TRANSMITTER ROUND HIS NECK. INSTANTLY ARCHIE, OBEYING THE SIGNALS, KNELT BEFORE THE CHIEF
HE IS ASKING YOU TO FORGIVE HIM, O CHIEF
SEE — GREAT JU-JU IS SORRY HIM MY SLAVE!
WAH! OUR CHIEF NOW MIGHTIER THAN JU-JU

WITHOUT DELAY THE PALS SET ARCHIE TO WORK. THANKS TO ITS COLOSSAL STRENGTH, THE GREAT ROBOT SWIFTLY PILED UP THE DEBRIS AND REMOVED IT IN ENORMOUS ARMFULS. STACKS OF REEDS AND SAPLINGS WERE GATHERED AND DRAGGED TO THE VILLAGE

IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE TO ARCHIE WHEN THE PYGMIES DECIDED TO HAVE JOY-RIDES!
IT WON'T TAKE LONG AT THIS RATE TO REBUILD THE VILLAGE, KEN
ARCHIE IS SURE MAKING UP FOR THE DAMAGE HE CAUSED. HE'S AS STRONG AS A HUNDRED OF THESE PYGMIES!


ARCHIE PLAYED A PART EVEN IN THE THATCHING OF THE HUTS!
JU JU CAN LIFT US UP TO THE SKY!
ARCHIE HIM GOOD JU-JU HIM BETTER THAN LADDERS

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE LAST HUT WAS BUILT, AND TED MADE ARCHIE FLATTEN THE EARTH ROUND IT
HE'S DONE WELL, TED. THE PYGMIES HAVE NOW GOT ALMOST A BRAND-NEW VILLAGE
THEY'RE MORE THAN SATISFIED. THE CHIEF IS GIVING A GREAT FEAST IN ARCHIE'S HONOUR. ONCE THAT'S OVER, WE CAN CARRY ON TO THE COAST

EVERYONE JOINED IN THE FEAST, ARCHIE HELPING AS A COOK BY TURNING THE SPIT ON WHICH A WHOLE BUSH-BUCK WAS BEING ROASTED
THIS MEAT IS SUPER, TED
SO S THIS IT'S THE FINEST FEED WE'VE HAD FOR MONTHS
ARCHIE

AT THE END OF THE MEAL, TED TURNED TO THE PYGMY CHIEF
WE THANK YOU FOR THIS WONDERFUL FEAST, O CHIEF. KEN, THE JU-JU AND I MUST NOW CONTINUE ON OUR WAY

THE CHIEF STARED AT TED WITH HORROR. AND SO DID THE REST OF THE PYGMIES! THEN THE CHIEF SPOKE
WHITE MEN MAY LEAVE — YES. BUT NOT JU-JU. ARCHIE HIM OURS. I PROMISED TO SAVE HIM FROM FIRE I NOT SAY YOU COULD TAKE HIM AWAY
MIGHTY ARCHIE NOW PYGMY JU-JU!
HE IS OUR FRIEND. HE STAY WITH US!
KEN AND TED WERE STAGGERED
GOSH! I DIDN'T EXPECT THIS, TED. THEY MEAN IT, TOO. IF WE TRY TO SMUGGLE ARCHIE AWAY, THEY'LL FILL US WITH ARROWS!
I UNDERSTAND HOW THEY FEEL. ARCHIE'S A KIND OF GOD TO THEM. I JUST HAVEN'T THE HEART TO USE HIM AGAINST THEM. BUT HOW THE DICKENS CAN WE PERSUADE THEM TO RELEASE HIM?
TED RACKED HIS BRAINS FOR A PLAN. HE COULD, OF COURSE, TURN THE ROBOT INTO A POWERFUL FIGHTING FORCE - SET IT UPON THE TINY PYGMIES AND SCATTER THEM LIKE CHAFF. BUT HE HAD COME TO LIKE THEM TOO MUCH FOR THAT; AND HE CERTAINLY DIDN'T WANT TO INJURE — LET ALONE KILL — ANY OF THEM
TED WAS STILL BAFFLED WHEN A PYGMY CAME FRANTICALLY TEARING INTO THE VILLAGE
RUN! RUN! MIGHTY ELEPHANT HERD COMING THIS WAY BIG STAMPEDE! MUCH DAMAGE!
IT MUST BE THE SAME HERD THAT WRECKED THE VILLAGE!
BY THUMP! THIS MAY BE THE VERY CHANCE I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
WHILE THE TERRIFIED PYGMIES SCATTERED TO COLLECT THEIR BELONGINGS, TED SWUNG ROUND TO THE CHIEF
I CAN SAVE YOUR VILLAGE FROM THE ELEPHANTS. IF I DO SO, WILL YOU AGREE TO LET THE JU-JU ARCHIE LEAVE WITH ME AFTERWARDS? QUICK — SPEAK SWIFTLY, FOR THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE
I AGREE, O WHITE MAN
AT TED'S SIGNAL, ARCHIE SPED INTO ACTION. THE BATTLE TO TURN BACK THE HERD HAD BEGUN
IT'S UP TO ARCHIE NOW. THE FIRST THING I MUST MAKE HIM DO IS TO UPROOT SOME TREES. COME ON, KEN. IT IS GOING TO BE THE FIGHT OF A LIFETIME!
ARCHIE

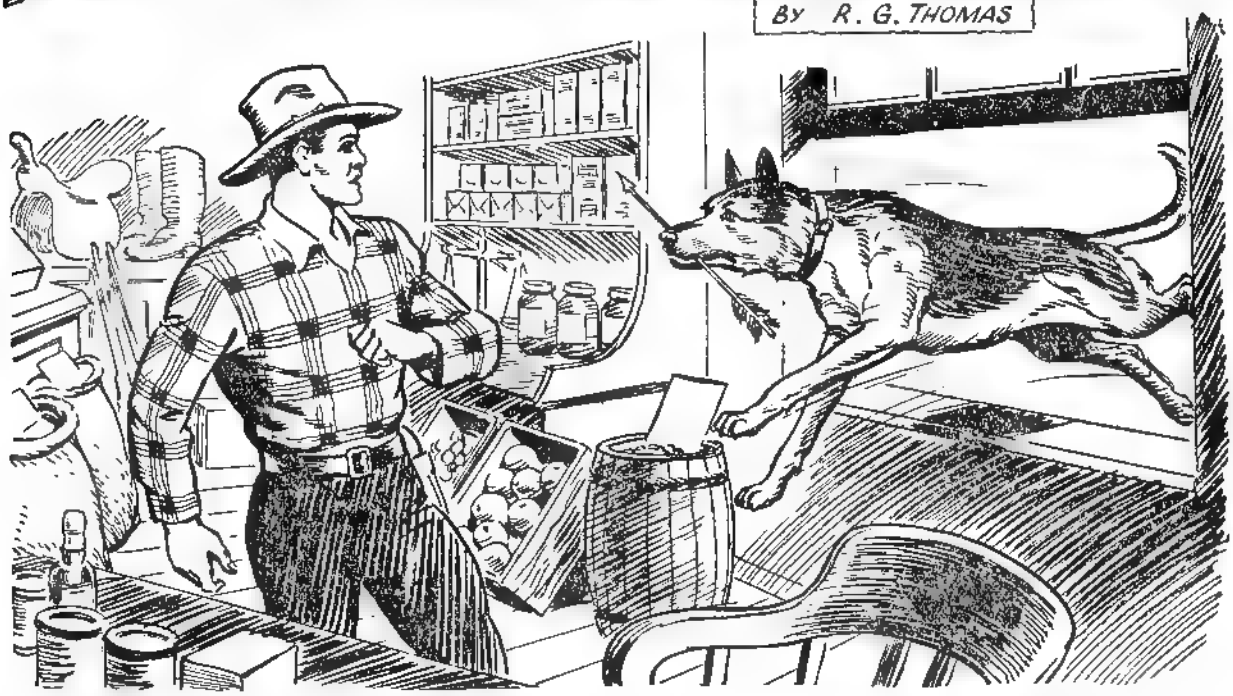
WITH THE AID OF HIS TRANSMITTER, TED MADE ARCHIE PULL UP YOUNG PALM TREES BY THE SCORE. AND AS FAST AS THE ROBOT DID SO, KEN AND THE PYGMIES HACKED THEM INTO HUGE DARTS
THAT'S THE IDEA. THOSE ELEPHANTS ARE DUE FOR A SHOCK THE INSTANT THEY COME WITHIN RANGE!
THEY'RE GETTING NEARER WITH EVERY SECOND!
TED HAD ALREADY LIT A FIRE. HE NOW THRUST INTO IT THE END OF ONE OF THE HUGE DARTS
SEE THE IDEA, KEN? SET THE END OF EACH OF 'EM ALIGHT SO THAT IT BECOMES A BLAZING TORCH. THEN I'LL MAKE ARCHIE THROW 'EM AS IF THEY'RE
A FEW MOMENTS LATER, AS THE MADDENED ELEPHANTS CHARGED FOR THE VILLAGE, ARCHIE ADVANCED GRIMLY TO MEET THEM. IN ONE HAND HE HELD A BLAZING PALM-DART
ARCHIE
ALL WILD ANIMALS ARE AFRAID OF FIRE. THE QUESTION IS—
WE'D BETTER HAVE, BY GOSH, HERE THEY COME

CONTROLLED BY TED'S TRANSMITTER, THE MONSTER ROBOT HURLED TORCH AFTER TORCH SO THAT THEY STUCK INTO THE GROUND AHEAD OF THE ELEPHANTS
THEY'RE SLOWING UP! THEY DON'T LIKE THAT LINE OF FLAMES!
IF THEY TURN AWAY, WE'LL BE O.K. BUT IF THEY COME ON HEAVEN HELP US AND THE BUSHY VILLAGE!
THE LEADER OF THE HERD WAS AN ENORMOUS BULL TUSKER. DESPITE HIS FEAR OF FIRE, HE CONTINUED TO ADVANCE
WHEREVER HE GOES THE OTHERS ARE SURE TO FOLLOW. EVEN SO, HE'S BEING TORCHES DON'T SEEM TO WORRY HIM!
I'VE GOT TO MAKE ARCHIE TURN THE LEADER SOMEHOW. IT'S GOING TO BE A BATTLE BETWEEN THEM — AND MAY ARCHIE WIN IT!
IN RESPONSE TO THE SIGNALS OF TED'S TRANSMITTER, ARCHIE BOUNDED FORWARD AND GRIPPED THE HERD-LEADER BY ITS MASSIVE TUSKS
SUDDENLY EVEN ARCHIE CAN'T OVERPOWER AN ELEPHANT. HE'LL NEVER MAKE THAT GREAT BULL TURN TAIL!
HE'S GOT TO, OR IF ARCHIE FAILS IT'S THE END FOR US ALL!

MIGHTY STRENGTH MET MIGHTY STRENGTH. THEN, AS THE SECONDS PASSED, ARCHIE GRADUALLY FORCED THE TUSKER'S HEAD DOWN. SLOWLY HE BEGAN TO TURN THE BULL ELEPHANT
TO THE PALS' HEART-FELT RELIEF, ARCHIE TWISTED THE ELEPHANT'S HEAD TO ONE SIDE
HE'S DOING IT, KEN — ARCHIE'S DOING IT! IN A MOMENT HE'LL MAKE THE TUSKER TURN TAIL!
A GIGANTIC RODEO ACT!
ALL AT ONCE THE HERD LEADER GAVE UP THE STRUGGLE. BELLOWING WITH RAGE, HE WHEELED AND WENT GALLOPING AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE. AND THE REST OF THE HERD FOLLOWED!
ARCHIE HAS WON! HE'S BEATEN THE BULL ELEPHANT — THE WHOLE LOT ARE IN FULL FLIGHT!
PHEW! IT WAS A CLOSE THING WHILE IT LASTED. ARCHIE DESERVES A MEDAL FOR THIS!
BEAMING WITH GRATITUDE, THE PYGMY CHIEF HUNG A GARLAND OF FLOWERS ROUND ARCHIE'S NECK AND LED THE ROBOT TO TED
JU-JU YOURS — OR YOUR PEOPLE — HIM TOO BIG FOR US
THANKS, CHIEF I DON'T THINK THOSE ELEPHANTS WILL EVER COME THIS WAY AGAIN AFTER THE SCARE THAT HAS GIVEN THEM
NOT UNTIL THE PALS AND THEIR ROBOT HAD BEEN LOADED DOWN WITH GIFTS DID THE PYGMIES LET THEM GO. THEN OFF THEY SET FOR THE COAST
FAREWELL, WHITE MEN! FAREWELL, GIANT JU-JU! PYGMIES NEVER FORGET YOU WE WILL HOLD FEAST EVERY YEAR IN MEMORY!
O.K., CHIEF! PERHAPS WE'LL COME BACK AND JOIN IN THE FEED ONE OF THESE DAYS!

ROD and THE RED ARROW RAIDERS

BY R. G. THOMAS



HIS REDSKIN ASSISTANT AMBUSHED

"WE relied on you for stores, Rod, and you promised we'd get them here on time. If we don't receive the stores by noon tomorrow, we'll be right in the soup."

Rod Fleming, the young storekeeper of the Moose Bend Trading Post in the wilds of Canada, tried to look confident as he answered the irate customer.

"Don't you worry, Sam," he said. "You'll get your stores in plenty of time. I'm expecting Eagle Wing to arrive back with them at any moment."

Sam Johnson gave an angry shrug

"If me and my partners don't leave by noon tomorrow," he snapped, "we shan't get to the Broken Hills district by the seventeenth. And the seventeenth is the last day that free land is available for settling. But we can't start out until we get those stores."

And then Sam stamped out of the Post.

Rod looked worried. Some days before, half a dozen would-be settlers had driven their wagon into Moose Bend. They were on their way to the Broken Hills district, where the Government was offering free land for settlement. They needed stores to complete the rest of the long journey, and Rod had promised to supply them.

As Rod's stocks were already low, Eagle Wing, his Redskin assistant, had driven off to bring in further supplies from a town over thirty miles away. Rod had confidently expected him to return the day before but there had been no sign of him.

"What can have happened to Eagle?" Rod asked himself. "He's never let me down before."

If the young Redskin failed to turn up soon Rod knew the angry settlers might try to take their revenge on the Post.

"Perhaps the wagon has broken down," Rod went on. "Perhaps——"

At that moment a streak of white came flashing through the open window. A magnificent husky dog landed at Rod's feet.

"Flash!" Rod cried "Then Eagle's back at last. You—."

Rod's relief vanished suddenly.

"You—you've been hurt, boy!" he gasped. "And—and why are you carrying that broken arrow?"

A thin line of dried blood was on the dog's coat—from a slight flesh wound caused by a bullet or a sharp weapon. And held in the dog's jaws was a long Redskin arrow, the shaft of which had been dyed red.

As Rod took the arrow away from Flash, the dog turned anxiously towards the door. Instantly Rod's eyes widened in horror

"I—I understand, boy," he gasped. "Eagle has been attacked by the Red Arrow Indians—that's why he's failed to show up with the stores. And that's why you've brought this arrow to me."

Rod feared the worst. For some months an unknown Indian tribe had been terrorising the district. Nobody knew where they came from, although many

A Fearless Young Trader's Thrilling Bid to Solve a Prairie Mystery

attempts had been made to follow their trail after a raid They were known as the Red Arrow Indians because of their dyed arrow shafts.

Next moment Rod was adjusting his gun in his belt and shouting for Mike Sims, his odd-job boy.

"Keep an eye on the Post, Mike," he ordered, "I've got some urgent business to attend to."

Mike Sims was usually to be found fast asleep, and by the time he'd rubbed his eyes wide open, Rod was already in the saddle. Rod raced away, with Flash bounding along ahead of him.

Rod rode with a heavy frown on his forehead. Where was Flash leading him, and what would he find when he arrived there?

On and on he rode. It was three hours later when he drew rein alongside a deserted wagon. Empty chests and cartons strewed the trail around it, but there was no sign of Eagle Wing.

Sticking in the sides of the wagon were several red-shafted arrows! This was where Eagle Wing had been attacked! But what had happened to him?

"They must have been after the stores," Rod quickly decided.

Had Eagle Wing been shot down in trying to defend the stores?

Rod searched the immediate vicinity but he saw no sign of his Redskin pal. And then he became conscious of Flash's strange behaviour. The big husky dog kept trotting off in the same direction and then turning back for Rod.

"I get it!" Rod gasped. "You're trying to tell me they took Eagle prisoner you want me to follow the trail."

He looked at the wagon and frowned. He was remembering how badly Sam Johnson and his companions needed the stores.

"I've got to find Eagle and get the stores back," he snapped. "And to do that, I'll need the wagon."

The wagon horse had obviously been stolen by the Redskins. Quickly Rod harnessed his own mount, and then clambered into the wagon.

Flash bounded ahead, as the wagon got moving, his nose close to the ground.

The dog soon turned aside from the trail and then Rod was driving over unfamiliar ground. But Flash kept running steadily a sign that he was following a strong scent. Over the uneven ground the wagon bumped, and slowly the sun sank lower in the sky.

Suddenly, Flash turned into a narrow valley, down the centre of which ran a fast-moving river. Rod was quick to sense the dog's excitement. Were they near the end of the trail?

Rod stood up and stared ahead. As far as he could tell he was entering a blind canyon—there appeared to be no way out at the other end. He saw a high wall of rock with a wide waterfall

"We must be near the Red Arrows' hide-out," he gritted. "'Guess I'd better leave the wagon here."

Leaping from the wagon, he ran after his husky dog. He saw Flash reach the bank of the river almost directly underneath the waterfall. Then the dog disappeared!

Rod raced on. He came to the river bank and he only just pulled up in time. For here was a steep drop into the water.

"Flash!" Rod called. "Where are you?"

No reply came. He strained his eyes, but there was no sign of Flash at all.

"Why did he come here?" Rod asked himself. "Surely he couldn't have followed a false trail?"

Rod looked at the wide sweep of the waterfall and at the deep pool underneath. Perhaps it was a whirlpool—perhaps Flash had been sucked down into its depths! But the pool might have something to do with Eagle Wing's disappearance! Instantly Rod decided to take a chance. He took a header into the pool!

INTO THE UNKNOWN VILLAGE

DOWN and down Rod went and he quickly realised that this was no whirlpool. The water was surprisingly clear, but still he saw no sign of his husky dog.

His lungs were almost bursting when he at last surfaced. What could have happened to Flash? He was a fine swimmer the pool would have had no danger for him. Had he stunned himself in falling—had he been swept away?

Then Rod thought his imagination was playing tricks. For he caught a glimpse of Flash's head. Next moment it had gone!

The dog's head had appeared at the bottom of the waterfall!

With strong strokes Rod surged under the waterfall. A great weight of water cascaded upon his shoulders, and then he was behind the fall and reaching up to grasp a ledge.

And crouched on the ledge was Flash!

"Gosh!" Rod exclaimed. "So this is where the Red Arrows have taken Eagle Wing!"

For behind the fall was the opening of a large tunnel!

Scrambling out and followed by Flash, Rod went slowly forward. The tunnel took a sharp turn and then, ahead of him, was a circle of light.

Once at the end of the tunnel, Rod found himself gazing into a narrow rock basin set among the hills. And in the basin was a small Indian village!

"So this is where the Red Arrow Indians hang out," he muttered. "No wonder they've been able to make raids and then vanish—this is a perfect hideaway"

His eyes darkened. For between him and the village a stake had been driven in the ground. And tied to that stake was his Redskin pal, Eagle Wing!

Rod clenched his fists. Somehow he had to rescue Eagle, and then his precious stores.

"I've got to get help here as quickly as possible," he muttered. "Come on, Flash—I've a job for you."

Back along the tunnel he went. He found then that by walking along the ledge he could get to the bank of the river without passing underneath the waterfall.

On a sodden piece of paper he wrote a message to Mike Sims, his odd-job boy at the Post, giving him the location of the valley and ordering him to rustle

up all the help he could. He fastened the paper to Flash's collar.

"Home, boy!" he ordered. "Quickly!"

Flash went off like the wind. Would he bring Rod help in time?

Rod looked at the top of the tall cliff above the waterfall.

"I've got to get to the top of it," he vowed. "And before the sun goes down."

It was a tough climb, but Rod made it at last. There were thick clusters of shrub at the top and quickly he tore up a great pile of the dry undergrowth. After setting it alight, he used his jacket to set up a series of thick smoke signals!

Daringly Rod dived into the treacherous, quick-moving river. He was determined to learn the strange secret of the roaring waterfall!

He was hoping they would be seen and understood by the friendly Indians on the nearby Reservation. For Chief Leatherneck, the leader of the Reservation, was Eagle Wing's father and, once he knew of Eagle's danger, he and his braves would come to his son's aid against the ruthless Red Arrow tribe.

Smoke signal after smoke signal Rod sent up until the light was almost gone. Suddenly there was a buzz like an angry bee alongside his head, and next moment an arrow with a red shaft crashed into a rock just ahead of him.

Rod fell flat on his face! He was being attacked by someone of the Red Arrow tribe!

REDSKINS FOILED BY FIRE!

ROD had not been touched by the arrow. And as only one arrow had been fired, he judged that he had only one enemy to deal with

The arrow had bounced off the rock, and Rod's arm had fallen on to it. Quickly his fingers closed over it and he slowly drew it underneath him. A moment later and the arrow was wedged between Rod's arm and his body.

Because of the fading light the young trader hoped that the enemy Redskin would think that he'd been hit by the arrow.

Slowly, Rod eased his six-gun out of his belt.

Suddenly there was a soft tread alongside him and he heard a satisfied grunt. At the same time Rod moved quickly. His hand shot out, grabbed an ankle, heaved, and a Redskin came crashing down. Like a flash Rod brought the butt of his gun down on to the Red Arrow's head.

"That'll keep you quiet for a bit," Rod murmured, as the Redskin crumpled up, K.O.'d. "I suppose you were on guard up here."

Before the Redskin had recovered consciousness, Rod had bound and gagged him

"And now," Rod told himself grimly, "I've got to rescue Eagle Wing from those red bandits."

There was just light enough for him to climb down the rock face. Then it was pitch dark.

Down the valley Rod went, and brought his wagon almost up to the waterfall.

"Now for Eagle and the stolen stores," he gritted.

Racing into the secret tunnel behind the waterfall, the fearless young trader was amazed to hear the sound of chanting coming from the Red Arrows' camp!

He burst out of the tunnel—to be met by a horrifying sight.

Eagle Wing was still bound to the stake, but now a mighty fire was blazing just in front of him And round the fire a great circle of painted Redskins was slowly dancing!

"They—they mean to kill Eagle!" Rod gasped.

For a moment he felt completely helpless. He was only one against a whole tribe of ruthless Redskins!

"I've got to do something," he cried. "Something to take their attention from Eagle."

He ran along one side of the basin, and got to work.

Ten minutes later, when the death dance was at its height, a sheet of flame suddenly shot into the air from the trees at the far side of the village! It was quickly followed by two other pillars of flame!

A frantic yell rang out in the Indian dialect—"Fire! Wigwams in danger!"

The chanting and the dancing came to a sudden stop. The air was filled with wild yells of alarm as the whole tribe ran towards the fire, anxious to put it out before it reached the wigwams.

Eagle Wing was slumped in his ropes when someone moved quietly in front of him. He lifted his head and saw Rod!

"Keep your pecker up, Eagle," Rod whispered quickly. "I'm getting you out of this while those Red Arrows are busy with the fire I've just started."

A faint smile showed on the young Redskin's face.

"Eagle Wing guess Flash would warn you," he said slowly. "I knew you soon come to my aid."

Quickly the young trader cut his Redskin pal's bonds.

The last of the flames was dying down before Eagle Wing could move his stiffened muscles. Then he and Rod ran for the tunnel. But just before they were out of range of the fiery glow, the alarm was raised!

The Redskins tackling the blazing wigwams had glimpsed the pals. Grabbing their weapons, they began to charge towards the tunnel.

Rod turned to Eagle Wing.

"We've got a good lead, old pal," he exclaimed. "They won't catch —"

The young trader broke off with a gasp of dismay and surprise. For thundering from the tunnel came two Red Arrow raiders on horseback, returning to their camp!

But before the two bandits could realise what was happening, Rod bounded into action.

"At 'em, Eagle!" he whooped. "They're not going to stop us."

Dodging round the horses' heads, Rod and Eagle tackled a Redskin apiece. Gripped by one leg, each bandit was hauled from his saddle, to hit the trail in a cloud of dust!

With the two men lying stunned, Rod grabbed Eagle by the arm as their pursuers drew near.

"Come on!" Rod gasped. "We'll trick 'em yet."

Through the dark tunnel they felt their way. At last Rod was helping Eagle Wing along the ledge behind the waterfall. They came to the wagon and still none of the Red Arrow tribe appeared on their track.

Eagle Wing was just about to jump aboard the wagon when Rod stopped him.

"We're staying here!" he rasped. "Get behind that rock!"

Quickly he turned his wagon-horse, smacked its haunches, and sent it galloping away. As the wagon bounced its way across the prairie, Rod dropped down behind a large boulder, alongside Eagle Wing.

And not a moment too soon. For a horde of yelling Red Arrow braves, mounted on horses, came pounding from the secret tunnel. They leapt direct from the waterfall to the bank.

Spotting the wagon, they set off after it!

"That horse of mine will give 'em a good run for their money," chuckled Rod.

The two pals remained crouched behind the rock until they again heard the sound of hoofbeats.

"Red Arrow Indians come back," Eagle Wing murmured.

But a white shape came leaping ahead of the horsemen!

"It's Flash!" Rod shouted, getting to his feet. "He's brought help!"

At Rod's yell the horsemen reined in their mounts. Rod glimpsed Mike Sims, along with several men from Moose Bend, and Chief Leatherneck and his tribe. The two parties had met on the trail and joined forces.

"Now we can arrange a real surprise party for those Red Arrows," grinned Rod.

It was nearly an hour later that the Red Arrow Indians rode back into their hiding-place. They had caught up with the wagon after a long chase and found it empty.

Once inside the rock basin, the Redskin bandits dismounted and gathered around their Chief for a council of war. Their faces were evil in the light of the dying fire.

The Chief spoke gruffly, but in a voice filled with menace.

"The secret of this village is now known to two men," he declared. "Fleming, of the Trading Post and Eagle Wing, the son of Leatherneck. Unless these two men die, we will no longer be able to live here in safety. Now we take warpath to Moose Bend and destroy them!"

Fierce grunts of approval greeted the words.

But from the darkness beyond the fire glow, Rod Fleming laughed loudly.

"Your talk is the talk of a fool," he cried. "Red men who take the warpath in these days land only in jail. And that's where you and your renegade followers are going now."

Next moment and Rod stepped boldly into the light of the fire, to the amazement of the Redskins.

Recovering, the Red Arrow Chief plucked a tomahawk from his belt with lightning speed. He drew back his arm, intending to hurl the terrible weapon at the young trader.

But the tomahawk was never thrown. The voice of Chief Leatherneck, Eagle's father, suddenly resounded through the village.

"Stay your hand, O false Redskin," he warned, "or you and your tribe will die at once. My braves have you surrounded. I, Leatherneck, have spoken."

Instantly Chief Leatherneck's Indians appeared within the circle of firelight. The Red Arrow tribe were well and truly beaten!

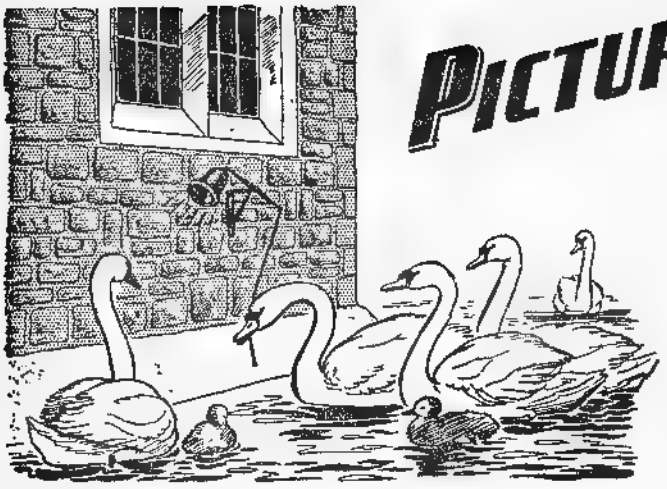
Rod touched Eagle Wing on the shoulder.

"They don't look so happy now, eh?" he chuckled. "Well, old pal, our next job is to find our stores and then get them to Moose Bend without wasting a second."

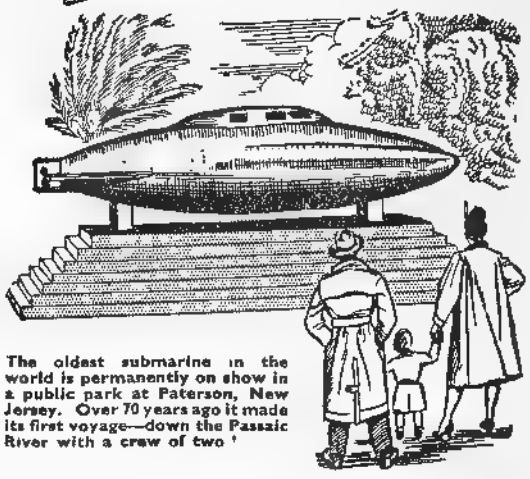
Luckily Rod discovered his stores almost intact, and after rounding up his horse and wagon, was able to drive into Moose Bend with the stores a good four hours before noon.

Sam Johnson and his companions were delighted, and within half-an hour were on their way. They would reach the Broken Hills district in time to settle there, after all. And they only had one person to thank—Rod, the young trader of Moose Bend!

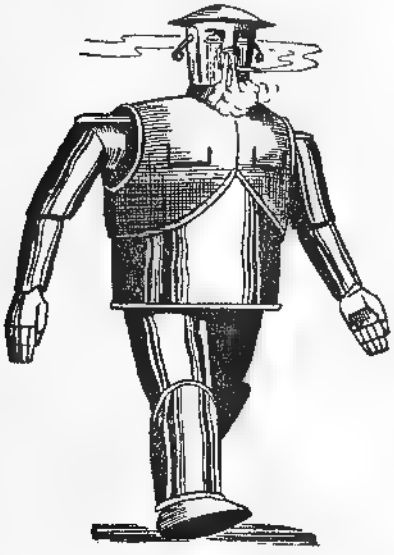
PICTURE PARADE of



For over 100 years, the swans on the Bishop's Palace Moat at Wells, Somerset, have been ringing a bell for food when they are hungry. This trick has been handed down by generations of swans to their cygnets.



The oldest submarine in the world is permanently on show in a public park at Paterson, New Jersey. Over 70 years ago it made its first voyage—down the Passaic River with a crew of two!



Two Swiss engineers have constructed "Sabor," a 7-feet-tall robot, which weighs 700 lbs. This mechanical man can talk, walk, flash his eyes, smoke cigarettes, and blow smoke out of his nostrils. His ears are microphones, which transmit orders to his internal controls.

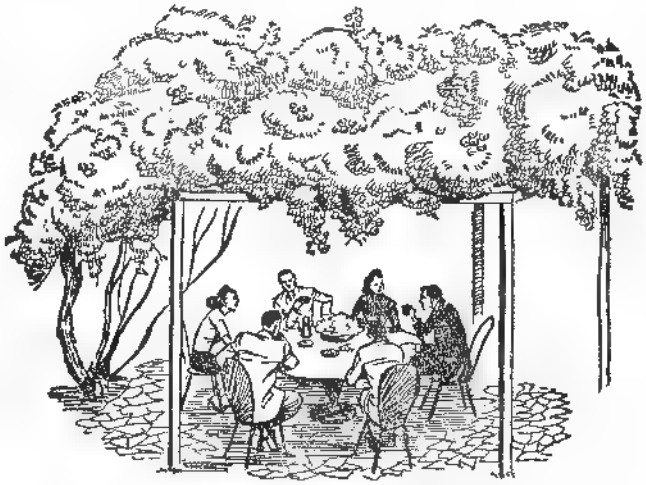
A building firm in Paris doesn't go to the trouble and expense of putting up scaffolding when constructing houses. Instead, it engages craftsmen who can walk—and work—on stilts! This saves climbing, time and money

The two unusual signs shown above are posted on the road to White Canyon, Utah, U.S.A. This is because the sand can bring slow-moving cars to a stop by engulfing their wheels, while sudden cloudbursts can start a flood that will wash vehicles away

FACTS from NEAR and FAR

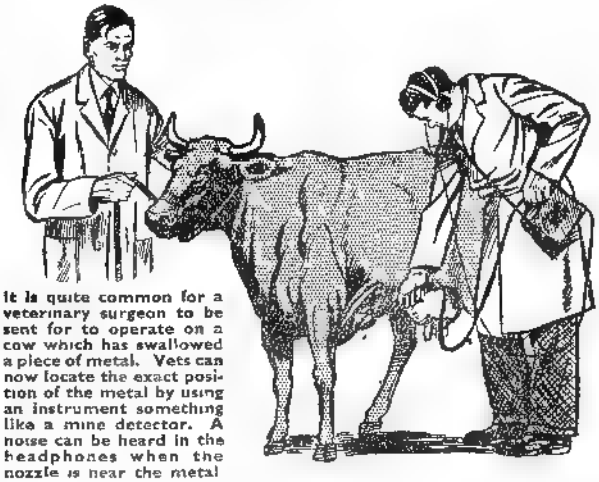
A 40-year-old Italian, Raimonde Bucker, established a world's record by diving to a depth of 128 feet without an artificial breathing aid. He wore only frogman's flippers, goggles, clips on his nose, and bathing trunks.

Nearly 50 years ago, a giant Sequoia tree was sawn completely through by Californian lumberjacks—but it is still standing! The tree is so wide and heavy that all attempts to bring it down have failed.



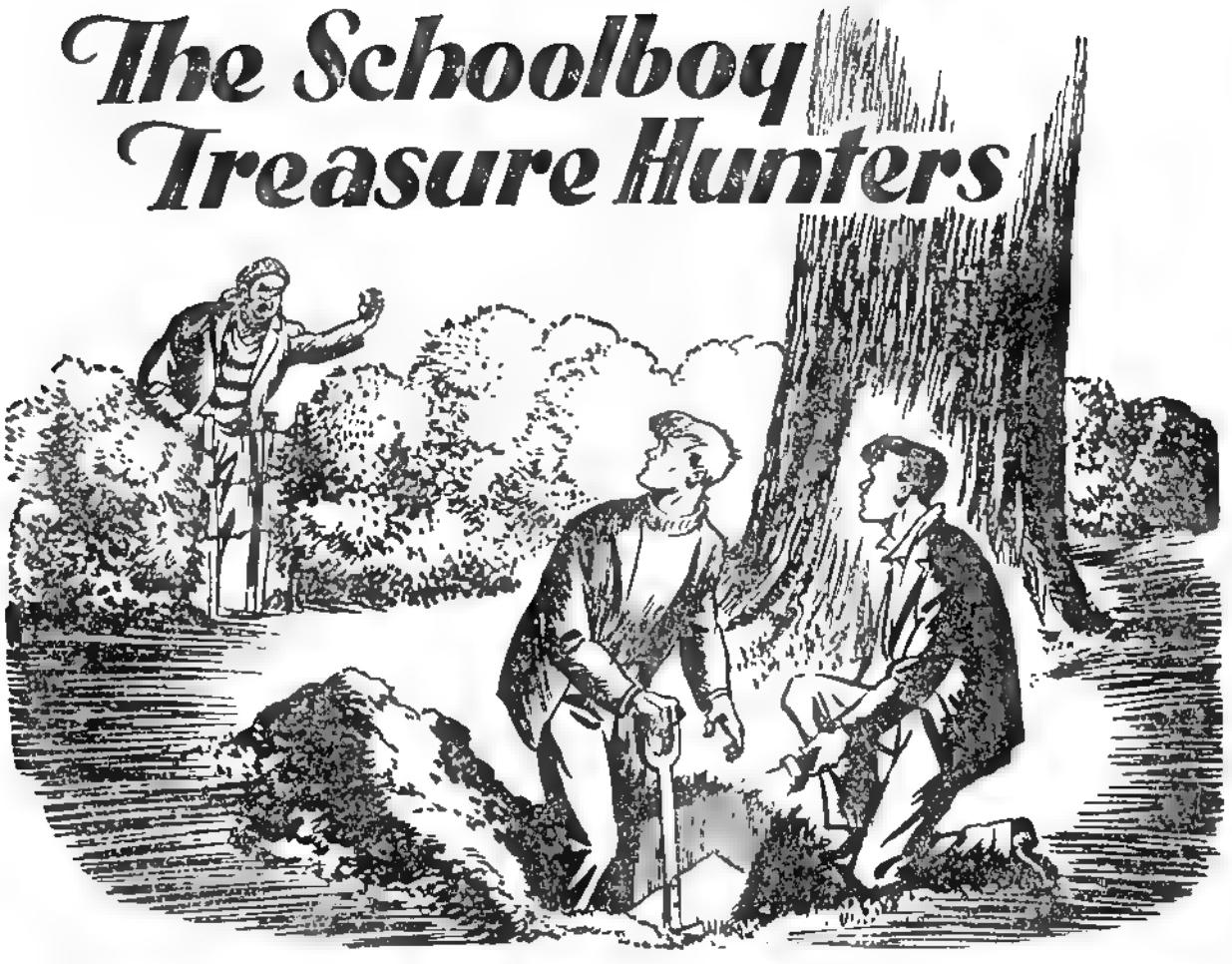
The biggest rosebush in the world, with hundreds of thousands of blooms, covering an area of 2,000 square feet, is to be found at Tombstone, Arizona. This American town, now peaceful and law-abiding, was once the "toughest" in the West, and the haunt of many notorious bandits.

One day in 1943, a Mexican farmer was amazed to find a volcano thrusting itself up through one of his fields. Given the name of Paracutin, the volcano has built itself up to a height of 1,500 feet above ground level—and is still active!



It is quite common for a veterinary surgeon to be sent for to operate on a cow which has swallowed a piece of metal. Vets can now locate the exact position of the metal by using an instrument something like a mine detector. A noise can be heard in the headphones when the nozzle is near the metal

The Schoolboy Treasure Hunters



By Hedley Scott

THE SAILOR WHO WASN'T!

"AHOY, there, messmates! Am I on course for Benson Grange?"

The hoarse bellow made Tony Waters and his cousin Jim Loveday jump. The pals were standing at the foot of the most heavily-laden apple tree in Squire Benson's orchard. The generous Squire had given them permission to fill their kitbag with apples.

They had been so busy that they had not observed the arrival of the stranger who hailed them. He peered at them over the top of the hedge, squinted up at the fruit-laden tree, then at the swollen kitbag, and winked.

'Scrumpin', my hearties, eh? Bless you, I bin a boy myself, but I got no teeth for apples now!" As if to prove his words, he grinned broadly, revealing only two tobacco stained teeth in his mouth.

The cousins grinned back in return and eyed the man keenly. He was a stranger in the district of Tulpenny and his general appearance was somewhat extraordinary. On his head was a large, grubby, red-and-white-spotted handkerchief, worn bandana fashion. Two rings, suspiciously like brass curtain rings, hung from his two large ears, while several days' growth of stubbly beard did much to give a ferocious appearance to a thin, hollow-cheeked face, brightened by a pair of foxy, blue eyes.

"Nautical Ned, that's me, messmates!" volunteered the newcomer. "Bound for Benson Grange. Am I on the right course?"

"Why, yes," replied Tony. "The house is about a quarter of a mile farther on. When you come to the fork road, turn left by the Friar's Oak."

"Ah! The Friar's Oak!" exclaimed Nautical Ned, his eyes gleaming. "I mean, thank you, messmates. Walkin' is tedious business for a peg top."

Neither of the boys realised what he meant until, moving back a pace or two from the hedge, Nautical Ned revealed that in place of a right leg he sported a wooden peg leg, often seen on old time sailors who had lost a leg in battle.

The rest of him was somewhat unusual, too. Strapped at his back was a hiker's pack and protruding from it was a slightly handled spade—strange kit for a sea-faring man. His next remark was very strange, too.

A Midnight Expedition—a Peg-legged Sailor—and a Big Surprise!

"Messmates, I can see you are educated!" he boomed. "Now which is the North ."

"The North?" the cousins gasped, blinking in surprise.

"But I thought you were a sailor?" Tony added. "You should know where the North is."

"Well, I've just lost me bearings, that's all. Nautical Ned, that's me. Born and bred to the sea. I've sailed with Nelson —."

"WHAT?"

"Ahem, I mean Beatty and Haig —."

"Haig was not a sailor," hooted Jim Loveday. "He was a general!"

"Was he now? Ah, well, my memory ain't what it used to be, young feller. But you tell me, which is the North—then I'll get under way again."

"Knock me down with a crumpet!" breathed Tony Waters. "Fancy a sailor not being able to tell where the North is." He glanced at his watch. "According to my reckoning, the sun is due South now, so you are actually facing due North. That's it, sir as you're facing at this moment, that's due North."

"Thanky, son. Up with the anchor, Nautical Ned, an' a fair wind," chortled the stranger. He paused to wink at the pals. "An' I won't say a word to the Squire about his apples. So-long!"

He stomped off laboriously. The cousins stood staring after him, curiously.

"Well, what a queer bloke," announced Tony. "Never seen anyone like him before in Tulpenny, have we, Jim?"

"He lied to us," announced Jim thoughtfully. "D'you know, Tony, I don't believe that old scoundrel has ever seen the sea. All that talk was put on. Nothing weatherbeaten about his face, either. Pale and soft it was ."

"But the wooden leg, Jim——."

"Pooouf!" sniffed his cousin. "What's a wooden leg, anyway? Hundreds of people have wooden legs, but it doesn't follow they've been to sea. In my opinion he was a bit of a crackpot."

"Oh, come off it, Jim. He was all there. But I wonder what his business is with Squire Benson"

"Which reminds me, the sooner we get home with this lot, the sooner we can start eating some of these apples."

The two pals walked towards the hedge.

"Gosh, I can't help thinking about that peg-leg sailor," frowned Jim. "I'd like to know what he's doing around here."

Between them they hoisted the kitbag of apples over the hedge and scrambled after it. They were about to head for home when, from some distance away, came a shout of fear, followed by an agonised cry for help.

"Help! Help! H—E—L—P!"

"Come on, Jim!"

Forgetting the kitbag of apples, which was dropped unceremoniously at the side of the narrow road, Tony, followed by Jim, raced in the direction of the cry.

They came to the fork road, marked by the famous Friar's Oak. Some little distance away from it, beyond a fence, and brandishing a short-handled spade, was Nautical Ned. And about a dozen yards from the old man was Squire Benson's prize bull, called Rufus!

"Phew!" whistled Tony. "What did the old fool want to go in there for. The notice-board gives warning of the bull. It's a dangerous beast and we told him to take the left fork for the house."

"Come on, Tony. We must try and attract the bull, and give old peg-leg a chance to get clear."

Jim started to yell and wave his handkerchief above his head. Then he gave instructions to his cousin.

"You go and help Nautical Ned, while I run into the meadow and try to lead the bull the other way! Now don't argue, Tony—do as I say."

Jim climbed the stout fencing, dropped lightly into the green meadow grass on the other side, and raced towards the bull. The infuriated animal stood with lowered head, pawing the grass, swishing its tail angrily and eyeing the old man balefully.

Jim's wild yelling and the waving handkerchief distracted it.

With a challenging bellow it turned and lumbered after Jim. Meanwhile, Tony raced up to Nautical Ned.

"Come on, you!" he snapped at the shaking cause of all the trouble. "What did you want to come into this meadow for? Asking for sudden death?"

"Sink me, messmate," howled Nautical Ned. "How was I to know it was a wild bull! He nearly got me, too!"

They retraced their steps to the high fencing and Tony helped the man to safety Then Tony sat on top of the fence and looked across the meadow. What he saw brought a shout to his lips and he closed his eyes in horror.

For it seemed that when the maddened bull was only a yard from him, Cousin Jim dropped flat on his face Had Tony not shut his eyes just then he would have seen the bull hurtle past, unable to check its speed or direction, and seen Jim scramble to his feet.

Racing at top speed to the nearest fencing, Jim was up and over it long before the bull came thundering back at him.

"Thank heaven the kid got clear," Nautical Ned breathed to Tony, mopping his damp forehead. "Messmate, I reckon I owe you two something." His face furrowed into lines of thought. "When that young shaver joins us I've got a proposition to make to you that'll make your hair stand on end with excitement!"

THRILLS AT MIDNIGHT

"IT'S a long story," began Nautical Ned, when Jim joined Tony, "so make yourselves comfortable while I tell it"

All three of them sat with their backs against a large tree, comfortably shaded from the blaze of the midday sun.

Nautical Ned closed his eyes.

"Red Tiger was a shipmate of mine, messmates, and he was a bit of a card—a pirate, you might say. Well, Red Tiger's gone on his last voyage, but he

gave me a legacy before he died." Buried treasure, it was. Ay, aye, buried treasure!"

"Gosh. But what's that to do with us?" gasped Tony.

"It's that treasure I'm going to give you a share in," continued Nautical Ned, a peculiar smile on his face.

"Is it pirate treasure?" asked Jim, his eyes shining with excitement

"Eh? Pirate treasure? Ye-es, of course, messmate. And it's buried in the ground not far from here!"

"Not far from here?" cried Jim. "Was that why you carried a spade?"

"Maybe, maybe," said Nautical Ned with faint reluctance. "But I haven't got that bloomin' spade now it's in the meadow, with the blamed bull. I was just having a quiet look round for the spot the treasure's buried in, messmates, when it came charging at me." He rubbed the side of his nose with a grimy forefinger.

"That bull has mucked up my navigation, in a manner of speaking. Bull fightin' at my time of life, an' with only one leg, ain't my idea of a pleasure trip"

"But about the treasure—" began Tony impatiently. "What's the bull got to do with that?"

Nautical Ned considered the point slowly.

"Well, it s this way, I'm being honest with you, messmates, as you saved my life. We'll split the treasure into three equal shares. That treasure which old Red Tiger bequeathed to me is buried in that meadow"

"What?" the cousins burst out.

Nautical Ned opened his bleary, foxy eyes and nodded vigorously

"In that very meadow, shipmates. I'm telling the truth. Thousands and thousands of pounds, Red Tiger said."

"Phew! Spanish doubloons and pieces of eight—" began Tony

"Precious stones—" added Jim.

"Precious stones, right enough," growled Nautical Ned. "An' if you two sign on as my crew, in a manner of speaking, we'll go equal shares. But no talkin' to nobody about the treasure."

"We won't talk. Not a word to anyone!" vouched Tony.

Nautical Ned seemed relieved.

"I can see I can trust you. Very well. That big old oak in the meadow—you know, the one called—".

"Friar's Oak!" cut in Jim. "It's hundreds of years old! Is the treasure buried there?"

"Well, not exactly there," admitted Nautical Ned, "but it's the main landmark."

"You mean the treasure is buried so many paces from there?" nodded Jim. "Pirates always buried their treasure like that, didn't they?"

"Look here, messmate, you know too much," muttered Ned reprovingly. "You be quiet now and listen to your orders.

"We will all meet here at midnight!" he added, after an impressive pause. "One of you is to bring a spade and we shall also want a torch, and two lengths of cord"

"A spade to dig with, a torch to see by," frowned Jim. "But why the cord and why midnight?"

Nautical Ned wagged a grimy finger.

"Just skipper's orders, messmate. It'll be dark then, and we don't want any nosey-parkers looking on. You two will do the digging, and bring the bag of treasure to me. I'll be the other side of the fence, away from that bloomin' bull."

"So the treasure's in a bag, eh?"

"That's what I said. A leather bag, messmate. You bring it to me and we'll open it and share and share alike. Can't say fairer than that, can I?"

The offer certainly did seem fair and the cousins could find no fault with it. Their biggest trouble was when, having parted from Nautical Ned on the understanding that they were to meet by the tree at midnight, they could not discuss the affair with their parents when they all sat down to their evening meal in the house which they shared

The cousins were so excited that their appetites suffered.

"Something wrong with those boys," ventured Tony's father. "They scarcely ate their dinner."

"Maybe they've been upset by those apples they brought," said Jim's father, with a grin. "Better pack 'em off to bed early tonight."

That didn't worry Tony and Jim. In their bed room, they discussed the affairs of the day and the plan for the night

"You know, Tony," said Jim, frowning, "there's something mighty queer about Nautical Ned. The more I think about him and his story of buried treasure the more suspicious I get."

"Go on, Gloomy," taunted Tony. "Tell me the worst!"

"In the first place, that old freak is no sailor. I'm convinced of that. Then he said he was going to see Squire Benson, but he never went. It's my belief he was going to do a bit of digging on his own. Now he's funked it, probably because of the bull, or something, so he's getting us to do his digging for him."

"Well?"

"Then he says the treasure is in a leather bag. If it's pirate treasure, it wouldn't be in a leather bag. Besides," he argued, "we re miles from the sea here! What's pirate treasure doing on Squire Benson's land?"

"Ask me another, chum," grinned Tony ruefully.

"And again," pursued Jim relentlessly, "why should a complete stranger be willing to share treasure with a couple of kids like us? Oh, I know we saved him from the bull; but it still doesn't add up!"

"I believe you've got something there," agreed Tony. "And this meeting at midnight . . . why midnight? And what's he want with two lengths of cord?"

"Search me!" exclaimed Jim. "But I'll bet you a coupla sixpenny ices that the whole thing is phoney. Now the thing is, are we going on with it, or are we going to back out?"

"I vote we see it through, Jim," urged Tony, who was guided more by a spirit of adventure than caution. "After all, we don't know where we've got to dig yet. It'll be rather fun, won't it?"

"Let's hope so," shrugged Jim. "Still, I'm with you. We'll see it through to the end. Gosh" he yawned "doesn't time drag. It's hours to midnight. Let's get a bit of shut eye. I've got the alarm clock under my pillow, all set for half past-eleven."

"Good idea. Happy dreams," grunted Tony, and soon, long before Jim, he was asleep.

Punctually at half-past-eleven the alarm clock, tucked under the pillow to muffle its ringing, woke Jim. Quietly he stirred his cousin.

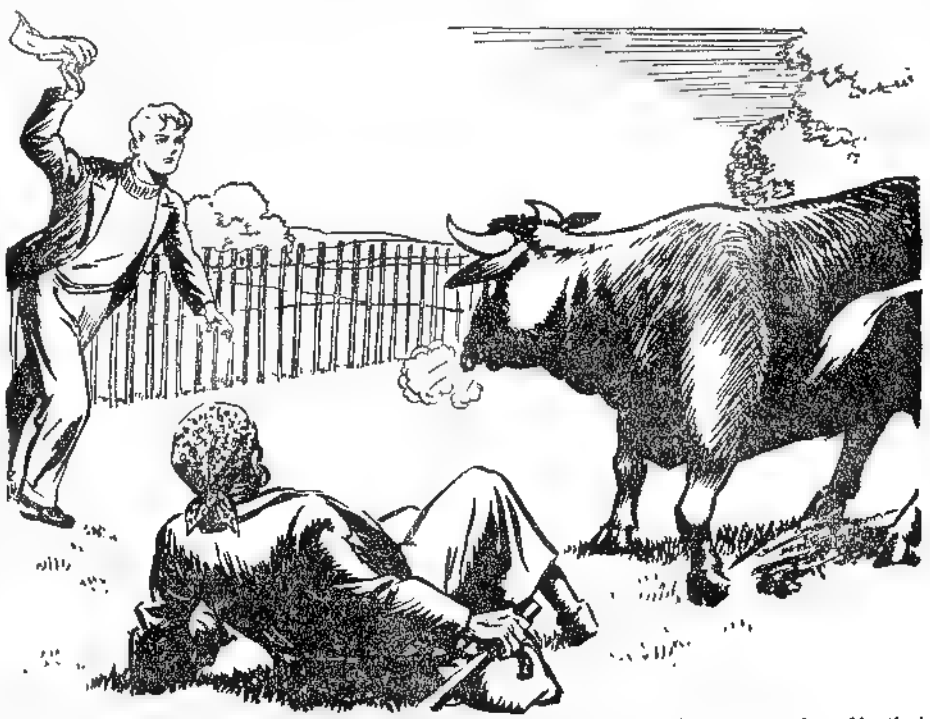
"Come on, Tony, you big stiff. Time for the great adventure Keep your big clumsy feet out of trouble and get dressed. Hurry!"

With all speed the two boys dressed Then with Jim lighting the way with his electric torch, they tiptoed out of the bedroom hoping that the two pillows humped in the hollows of their beds would deceive the eye of anyone who should chance to look in during their absence

Once clear of the house they made their way noiselessly round to the tool shed Collecting a short handled spade and the two lengths of cord insisted upon by Nautical Ned, they passed through the creaking garden gate and out on to the road.

The night was dark and chilly and the cousins were glad they had donned thick jerseys. Soon the agreed meeting place came in sight, and the cousins' hearts beat faster.

What adventures were in store for them?



Dashing forward and wildly waving his handkerchief, Jim caused the enraged bull to turn away from Nautical Ned But in saving the old sea salt, Jim had put himself in danger!

NAUTICAL NED TURNS NASTY

"SEE that!" Jim whispered, flashing his torch. The flash of light revealed a bicycle propped against the hedge.

"A bike!" gasped Tony. "What's it doing there?"

"Ask me another," breathed Jim. "And where's Nautical Ned? Ah—!"

Just as he spoke a shadow detached itself from near the hedge and moved towards them.

It was Nautical Ned!

"Greetings, messmates," he said in a hoarse whisper "You're ten minutes before time Got the spade—and the cord? Good! Give me the cord—and lead on with the spade. Don't use the torch more than necessary"

"I say, what's that bike doing there?" asked Jim, as the three of them moved into the field in which grew the Friar's Oak.

"Bike—" Nautical Ned seemed taken aback by the question. "Bike? Oh, I expect some farm hand left it there this afternoon. You needn't worry, there's no one else about. I've been here half-an-hour or more, and I haven't seen a soul." There was a harshness about his voice that made Jim feel uneasy "And, Tony, me lad, don't drag that spade on the ground it makes a horrible din. We don't want to wake the neighbourhood, do we?"

Tony grunted and said nothing. Like Jim he was all keyed up and wondering whether there really was any buried treasure hidden in the field.

Arriving at the age-old Friar's Oak, Nautical Ned came to a halt.

"Which is the North?" he asked abruptly, and the cousins immediately recalled his similar question of the morning.

Obligingly they pointed out the Pole Star and faced due North.

'Right," growled Nautical Ned, and the boys saw that he was quivering with excitement. "Here are your orders. Stand up against the Oak, face the North and measure off five full paces exactly. Got that?"

The boys softly repeated the instruction.

"Dig at the spot reached by the five full paces," went on Nautical Ned, "and about eighteen inches down you'll find the treasure. You two take it in turns to do the digging, the other holding the torch. I'll nip back over the hedge and keep a sharp eye open for that bull or anyone that might come this way. You did say the squire lets the bull roam loose, didn't you?"

" Sure. It sleeps in an open shed on the far side of the meadow," said Tony. " But I don't suppose he'll worry us "

" Don't forget, bring the leather bag straight back to me when you've unearthed it. Then " Nautical Ned added with a short laugh, " we'll share Red Tiger's treasure fair and square."

" Okay ! Come on Tony ! " said Jim.

Setting their backs against the massive trunk of Friars Oak, they turned their faces due North and began to stride out five full paces.

" One, two, three, four, five ! " counted Jim. " We'll dig round here, Tony. And I don't need a torch to dig. You can have second turn with the spade. Keep an eye open for the bull He's a light sleeper, from all accounts, and he doesn't like people who wake him up."

Sure enough the cousins had not been digging for more than three or four minutes when the thudding of feet told of the arrival of Rufus the bull.

The sound of digging had apparently aroused the bull's curiosity.

Ducking back behind the enormous circumference of the oak tree, Jim and Tony kept moving round it so that not even their shadowy outlines could be seen by the bull. It moved on, like a four footed sentry doing the rounds of the meadow and, when it had returned to its shed, the pals emerged from cover and recommenced their digging

From the other side of the fence came a hoarse command

" Get a perishing move on, can't you ? " Nautical Ned snapped impatiently " Hurry ! "

The cousins needed no urging. Between them they dug that square of meadow land as they had never dug the potato patch in their garden. At last a low whistle of excitement came from Jim. The spade had come up against something different, certainly not earth.

" Here it is, Tony ! I've struck it ! "

He worked feverishly to clear a space round what he had found.

" You're right ! It's a bag ! An attache case ! " whooped Tony. " Here, lay off with that spade, chum I can drag it clear now "

From the other side of the fence came another hoarse command.

" Don't open it. Bring it here at once. I know you've got it ! Bring it here ! "

" Despite what he says," gritted Jim, " I'm going to have a look at what's inside Shine the torch, Tony ! "

He knelt down by the case and fumbled with the rusted locks, while Tony focused the torch. At last the leather lid of the case hinged back

" Phew ! Diamonds ! " Tony and Jim gasped together.

The thin pencil beam of light lit up a glittering collection of stones that flashed and sparkled !

" Bring it over here ! " Nautical Ned rapped.

" Okay ! " called back Jim softly, and he clamped the lid of the case shut.

In a fever of impatience Nautical Ned awaited them. He snatched the bag out of Jim's hand even as the youngster sprang down from the fence. Snapping back the lid, he gave a cry of triumph as he glimpsed the diamonds.

" Pirates' treasure, eh ? " said Jim, in an odd voice. " Gosh, look out, Tony ! " For just then Nautical Ned had lashed out with a short length of piping which he'd held concealed under his shirt sleeve But Jim's warning came too late. The piping glanced off Tony's head sending him down in an unconscious heap.

Jim Loveday sprang forward, his fists clenched. He was reckoned to be the best boxer in the boys' club at Tulpenny and he showed it now !

Wham ! Biff ! A left and a right to the chest caught the rascally Nautical Ned by surprise. Another right and left spun him earthwards, so that he lay almost alongside young Tony, dazed but not completely K.O.'d

" Tony . . Tony, are you all right ? " Jim called to his cousin, but there came no response

Then he saw the lengths of cord he had brought and given to Nautical Ned hanging from the man's pocket. In each length of cord was a running noose, obviously made while the boys had been digging.

In a flash Jim Loveday guessed their purpose They had been intended to bind the two boys. The cousins were to be left bound, probably to the fencing, while Nautical Ned got away with the " treasure " !

" Well, they will still come in useful," Jim told himself, and before Nautical Ned could recover, bound the man's wrists with the cord

It was a full five minutes before Tony came to. He sat up, rubbing his head and wincing.

" Gee ! What kicked me ? A mule ! "

" No, old chap, a skunk who had a pal called Red Tiger. Look, he's beginning to take notice, but don't worry—I've roped him safe enough. How you feeling now ? "

" Grand ! " lied Tony valiantly. " But I don't get all this –"

Patiently Jim told him what had happened.

" Don't you realise what we've dug up, Tony ? " he added.

" Pirates' treasure," said his cousin.

" Pirates nothing ! " exclaimed Jim scornfully, " those diamonds belong to Squire Benson, I'm certain Don't you remember, about three years ago there was a big robbery up at the Grange ? "

" Oh, I've got you. Lot of diamonds and things pinched, weren't there ! They caught the thief days afterwards, but the police never found the swag. You mean *we've* found it, Jim ? "

" That's right ! " declared his cousin. " This bloke calling himself Nautical Ned was probably the thief. After serving time in prison, he came here. He took us for a couple of mugs. We were going to do the donkey work for him, dig up the swag from where he'd buried it, and he was going to get away on that bike propped up against the hedge, leaving us tied up like a couple of turkeys."

" Gosh ! And he coshed me with that piping ? "

" He did, but I squared accounts. Look here, Tony, You stand guard over him, while I nip along to the police. That bike will come in useful I

shan't be long. If that mug tries anything, bash him one!"

"You leave him to me!" said Tony, firmly. "Hop it, Jim!"

Jim tore off at full speed on the bike, and soon arrived at the Tulpenny police station, where his story of the night's events shook the sergeant into immediate action. A fast patrol car sped off to bring in the one-legged prisoner, the leather attache case with its precious contents, and the jubilant Tony.

A little later on, Tony's and Jim's parents, grim and unrelenting, arrived at the police station. The dummies in the beds had been rumbled and both pairs of parents had been worried as to where Tony and Jim had gone. Not even the valiant part the cousins had played in the finding of Squire Benson's diamonds satisfied the fathers.

Tony and Jim watched excitedly as the police-inspector pointed accusingly at Nautical Ned. "I know you," rapped the inspector. "You're an ex-convict!"

But the excitement of the night wasn't over yet. At the police station Nautical Ned proved to be something of a surprise-packet.

As he was led into the police station, the inspector peered at him closely. Then the inspector pointed in recognition

"I know you—you're an ex-convict!" he cried, and turned his head towards Tony and Jim. "This man is Slick Fleshman, a well-known crook!"

Nautical Ned, realising that his game was up, resigned himself to being led away to the cells

"His pose of being a sailor was quite clever in its way," explained the inspector. "Of course, he's no more a sailor than I am. Neither is he one-legged. He has two sound legs like the rest of us. But one of them is bent and strapped up above the knee so that he could fit the peg leg to it."

"But what was the idea, then?" gasped Tony.

"Why, he wanted to lead the trail away from himself. Tulpenny people would be able to speak of a weird-looking sailorman, with large ear-rings and a wooden leg. They would certainly never connect him with Slick Fleshman, late of Dartmoor Prison, and neither would the police. Fleshman planned to come and then disappear in the guise of Nautical Ned —when he had collected the swag. He had stolen the bike this afternoon from the market square and with the case full of diamonds he was going to get away."

"But how did he know about Red Tiger's treasure —I mean, Squire Benson's stolen diamonds," enquired Tony.

"Because Slick Fleshman and Red Tiger served a term at Dartmoor together. Red Tiger—he was the crook who burgled Benson Grange three years ago—died in prison. He must have passed on the information as to where he had buried the stolen stuff to Slick before he died. So now you have all the answers except one."

"Except one, sir—"

"Yes, there will be a pretty handsome reward for the recovery of these precious stones; just how much I'm afraid I can't tell you now. Well, gentlemen"—he turned to the cousins' fathers—"don't you think these youngsters ought to get a good night's sleep after what they've done. We'll put everything in order in the morning."

"Just as you say, inspector!"

And so Tony and Jim, not feeling quite so jubilant now, left the police station with their grim-faced fathers and, in silence, wended their way home.

Watched by his father as he got ready for bed, Jim plucked up enough courage to speak.

"I say, Dad. D'you really think I shall get a reward for what I've done tonight! Here, I say, what are you doing—oooooch -wowwp—Leggo!"

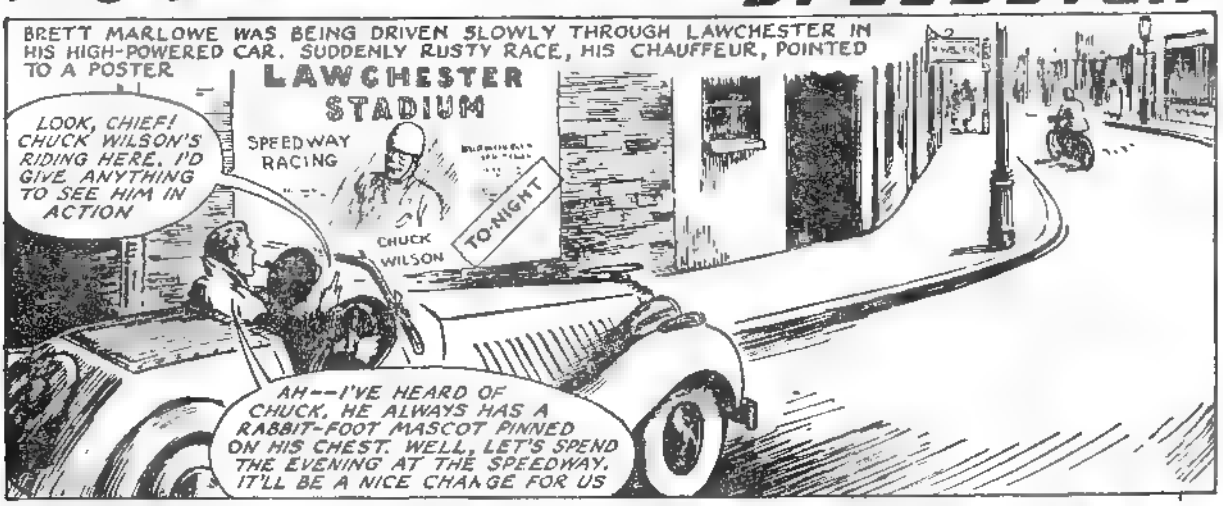
"I'm giving you your reward now, you young scamp!" explained his father grimly, whacking Jim across the seat with a leather belt. "I'll teach you to go gallivanting about in the middle of the night with a crook."

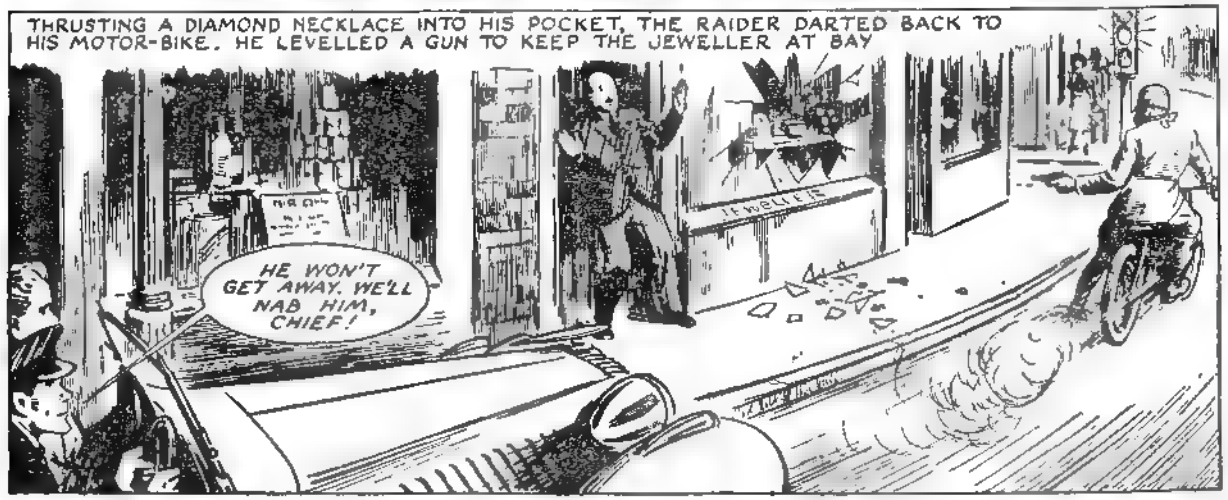
"After you with that belt," came a voice from the other side of the room. "Young Tony is dead keen to get his reward, aren't you, son?"

Starring Brett Marlowe, Detective

The SMASH-AND-GRAB SPEEDSTER

By JOHN FORDICE

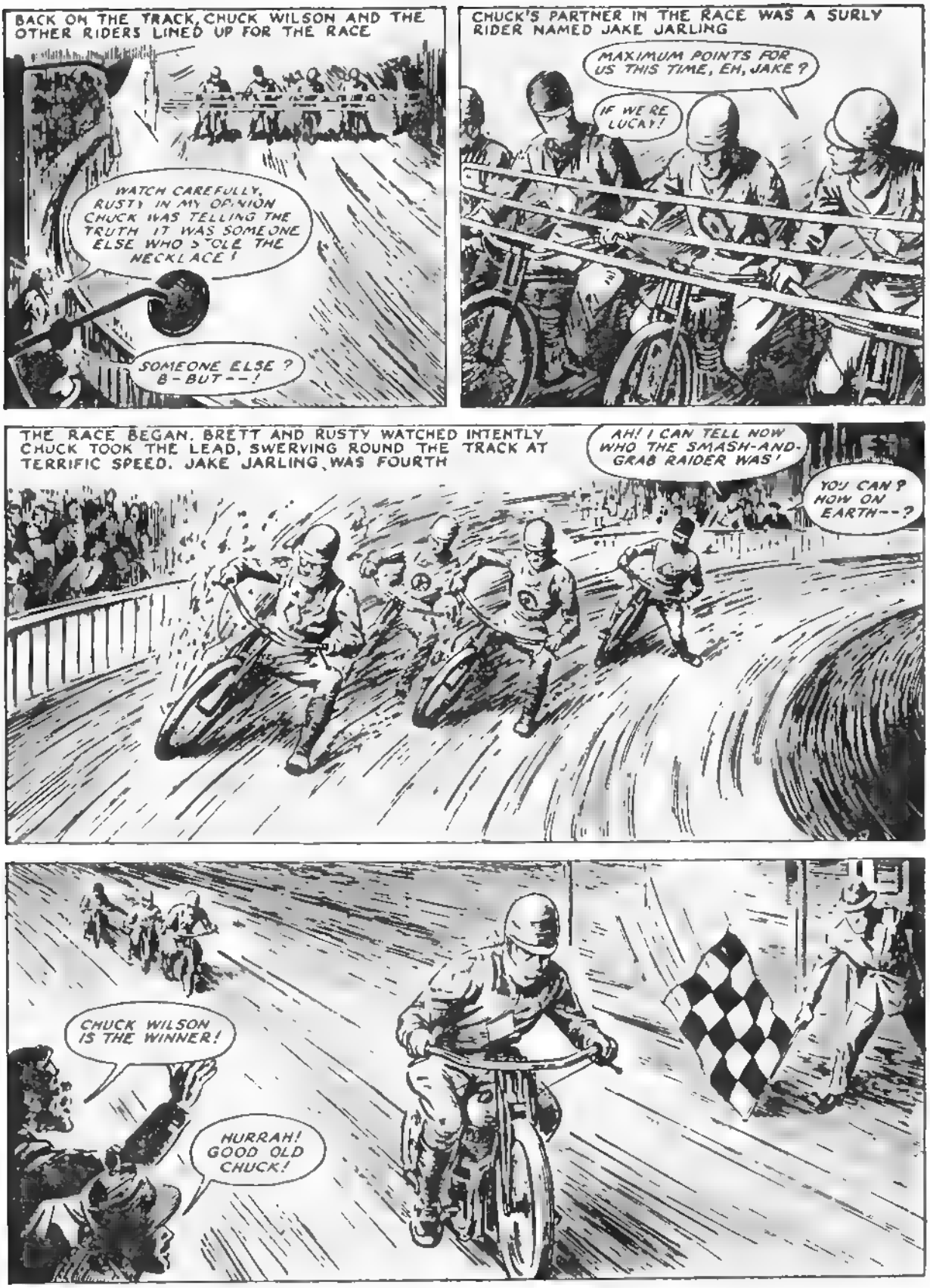

BRETT MARLOWE WAS BEING DRIVEN SLOWLY THROUGH LAWCHESTER IN HIS HIGH-POWERED CAR. SUDDENLY RUSTY RACE, HIS CHAUFFEUR, POINTED TO A POSTER
LAWCHESTER STADIUM
SPEEDWAY RACING
CHUCK WILSON
TO-NIGHT
LOOK, CHIEF! CHUCK WILSON'S RIDING HERE. I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO SEE HIM IN ACTION
AH--I'VE HEARD OF CHUCK. HE ALWAYS HAS A RABBIT-FOOT MASCOT PINNED ON HIS CHEST. WELL, LET'S SPEND THE EVENING AT THE SPEEDWAY. IT'LL BE A NICE CHANGE FOR US


THRUSTING A DIAMOND NECKLACE INTO HIS POCKET, THE RAIDER DARTED BACK TO HIS MOTOR-BIKE. HE LEVELLED A GUN TO KEEP THE JEWELLER AT BAY
HE WON'T GET AWAY. WE'LL NAB HIM, CHIEF!
JEWELLER

LUCK WAS WITH THE RAIDER. AS HE SPED OFF, TRAFFIC LIGHTS HELD UP BRETT'S CAR
I CAN TELL YOU WHO HE IS. IT'S CHUCK WILSON, THE SPEEDWAY ACE. I RECOGNISED HIM BY HIS RABBIT-FOOT MASCOT — AND BY HIS MOTOR-BIKE!
DON'T WORRY! WE'LL SOON OVERHAUL HIM
BRETT'S CAR WAS EVEN FASTER THAN THE RAIDER'S MOTOR-BIKE, AND WITHIN A FEW MINUTES——
THERE HE IS, RUSTY — TAKING THAT BEND JUST AS IF HE'S ON THE SPEEDWAY
IT'S HIM ALL RIGHT. GEE — TO THINK THAT CHUCK WILSON IS A CROOK! I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT
BRETT'S CAR DREW NEARER AND NEARER TO THE SPEEDSTER. BUT THEN——
HE'S MAKING FOR THE FOOTBRIDGE I GUESS HE'LL GIVE US THE SLIP AFTER ALL
A CUNNING MOVE THAT, CHIEF. YOU CAN BET YOUR BOOTS HE PLANNED HIS GETAWAY IN ADVANCE
WELL, THAT'S THAT. I CAN'T DRIVE A CAR ACROSS THERE. WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
CARRY ON TO THE SPEEDWAY. IF CHUCK WILSON IS RIDING, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO COMBINE BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE!
WHEN BRETT AND RUSTY ARRIVED AT THE STADIUM, THE RACING HAD STARTED
WHO'S THAT LEADING?
CHUCK WILSON HE'S A WIZARD!
GO IT, CHUCK!

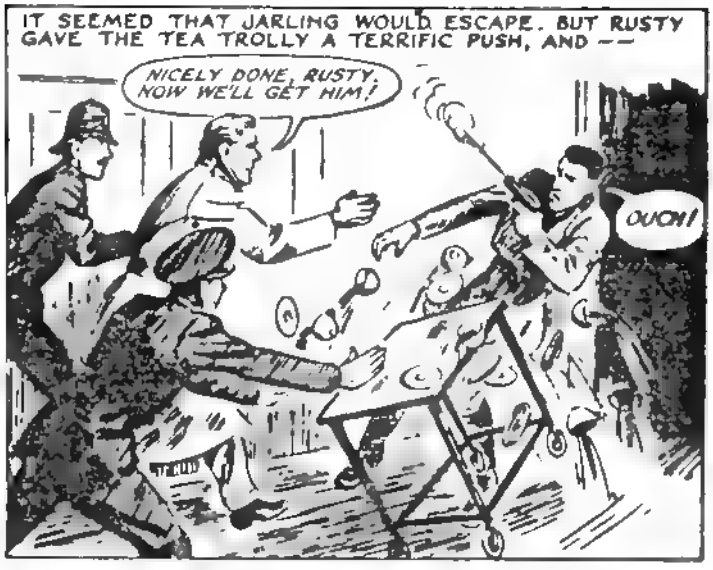
COME ON, CHUCK--KEEP IT UP!
THE LEADING SPEEDSTER, HOWEVER, WAS GRADUALLY OVERTAKEN BY THE OTHER THREE — AND LEFT BEHIND!
WELL, I'M HANGED! CHUCK HASN'T A CHANCE NOW. STILL, I'M NOT SURPRISED. AFTER COMMITTING THAT ROBBERY HE MUST BE FEELING PRETTY JITTERY
THE RACE ENDED, AND THE RIDERS RETURNED TO THE PITS. NEXT MOMENT——
HELLO--WHAT'S CHUCK UP TO NOW? SURELY HE ISN'T GOING TO BOLT!
COME ON, RUSTY. I'D LIKE TO HAVE A FEW WORDS WITH HIM
FURTIVELY THE RIDER HURRIED OFF
BEFORE BRETT COULD REACH HIM, THE CROOK HAD VANISHED. IT WAS THEN THAT A POLICE SERGEANT CAME ON THE SCENE. WITH HIM WAS THE SPEEDWAY MANAGER
GOOD EVENING, MR. MARLOWE! I'M LOOKING FOR CHUCK WILSON. HE CARRIED OUT A SMASH-AND-GRAB RAID IN LAWCHESTER THIS AFTERNOON AND STOLE A DIAMOND NECKLACE
I WANT TO FIND HIM, TOO, SERGEANT. IF NECESSARY WE MUST SEARCH THE ENTIRE STADIUM
LATER —
CHUCK WILSON SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED INTO THIN AIR, CHIEF
WHAT ABOUT THAT SHED, RUSTY? WE HAVEN'T BEEN IN THERE

WHEN THEY OPENED THE DOOR OF THE SHED, BOTH BRETT AND RUSTY GOT A SHOCK!
WE'VE FOUND HIM AT LAST! BUT WHO THE DICKENS TRUSSED HIM UP?
SO YOU'RE CUTTING YOURSELF FREE, EH, CHUCK? WHAT'S HAPPENED?
SOMEBODY STUNNED ME AND CARRIED ME IN HERE. WHEN I RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS I FOUND I WAS BOUND AND GAGGED. THEN THIS KNIFE AND MY RABBIT-FOOT MASCOT WERE TOSSED THROUGH THE WINDOW A FEW MINUTES AGO. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT
NEITHER CAN I! IT SOUNDS A RUM STORY TO ME, CHIEF
AS THE POLICE SERGEANT AND THE MANAGER ENTERED THE SHED, CHUCK REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD BRETT
WELL, I'VE HEARD SOME PHONEY YARNS IN MY TIME, BUT THIS BEATS THE LOT! I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT. YOU STOLE A DIAMOND NECKLACE THIS AFTERNOON--
WHAT? I TELL YOU I WAS LYING HERE, STUNNED!
WHETHER HE'S GUILTY OR NOT, IT'S TIME FOR THE NEXT RACE. CHUCK IS RIDING IN IT
ONE MOMENT, SERGEANT!
I'M SORRY, SIR-- I'M PLACING HIM UNDER ARREST
I PARTICULARLY WANT CHUCK TO RIDE, AS I'VE AN IDEA IT MAY HELP TO SOLVE THIS EXTRAORDINARY MYSTERY. I'LL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM
VERY WELL, MR. MARLOWE. BUT I'LL BE WAITING FOR HIM IN THE PITS!

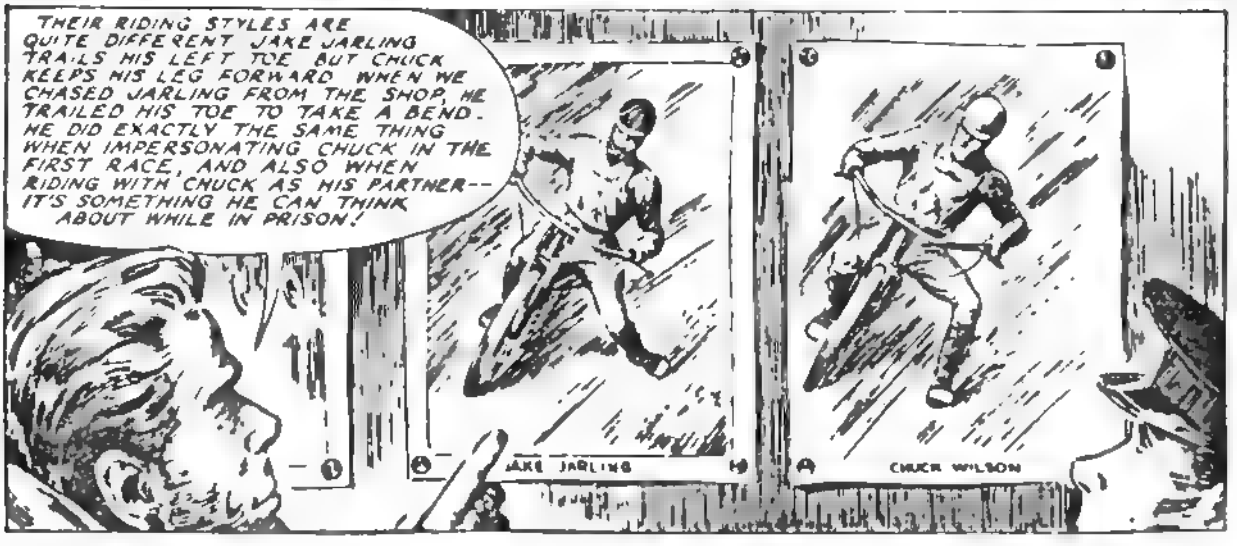

BACK ON THE TRACK, CHUCK WILSON AND THE OTHER RIDERS LINED UP FOR THE RACE
WATCH CAREFULLY, RUSTY IN MY OPINION CHUCK WAS TELLING THE TRUTH IT WAS SOMEONE ELSE WHO STOLE THE NECKLACE!
SOMEONE ELSE? B-BUT--!
CHUCK'S PARTNER IN THE RACE WAS A SURLY RIDER NAMED JAKE JARLING
MAXIMUM POINTS FOR US THIS TIME, EH, JAKE?
IF WE'RE LUCKY!
THE RACE BEGAN. BRETT AND RUSTY WATCHED INTENTLY CHUCK TOOK THE LEAD, SWERVING ROUND THE TRACK AT TERRIFIC SPEED. JAKE JARLING WAS FOURTH
AH! I CAN TELL NOW WHO THE SMASH-AND-GRAB RAIDER WAS!
YOU CAN? HOW ON EARTH--?
CHUCK WILSON IS THE WINNER!
HURRAH! GOOD OLD CHUCK!

CHUCK'S TRIUMPH WAS SHORT-LIVED. FOR THE POLICE SERGEANT ARRESTED HIM IN THE PITS, AND MARCHED HIM INTO THE DRESSING-ROOM. BRETT WAS SMILING, HOWEVER!
THAT WAS A GRAND RACE, CHUCK! WILL YOU GIVE ME YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
WHY, CERTAINLY!
CHUCK SIGNED!
BRETT THEN ASKED THE OTHER RIDERS FOR THEIR AUTOGRAPHS. THE LAST TO SIGN WAS JAKE JARLING
Jake
SUDDENLY BRETT SNATCHED THE BOOK FROM JAKE JARLING AND POINTED AT HIM ACCUSINGLY
YOU'RE THE MAN WHO STOLE THE NECKLACE! I NOTICED YOU WERE LEFT-HANDED WHEN YOU FLUNG THE BRICK THROUGH THE SHOP WINDOW! AND YOU'VE JUST SIGNED YOUR AUTOGRAPH WITH YOUR LEFT HAND
PHEW! SO HE MUST HAVE TAKEN CHUCK'S MOTOR-BIKE AND RABBIT-FOOT MASCOT, AND IMPERSONATED HIM!
REALISING THAT HIS CLEVER SCHEME HAD BEEN EXPOSED, JARLING PULLED OUT HIS GUN AND BACKED TOWARDS THE DOOR
STAY WHERE YOU ARE! CONFOUND YOU, MARLOWE! YOU'RE PRETTY CLEVER, BUT YOU WON'T GET ME

YES, I STOLE THE NECKLACE. I'VE ALWAYS HATED YOU, CHUCK WILSON — AND I MEANT TO FASTEN THE CRIME ON TO YOU. WHEN I CAME BACK FROM THE RAID, I TOSSED YOUR KNIFE AND MASCOT INTO THE SHED WHERE I HAD LEFT YOU, FEELING SURE THAT NO ONE WOULD THEN BELIEVE YOUR STORY


IT SEEMED THAT JARLING WOULD ESCAPE. BUT RUSTY GAVE THE TEA TROLLY A TERRIFIC PUSH, AND —
NICELY DONE, RUSTY. NOW WE'LL GET HIM!
OUCH!

THE CROOK WAS CAPTURED, AND WHILE THE SERGEANT WAS RECOVERING THE NECKLACE FROM HIM, RUSTY TURNED TO BRETT
THERE'S ONE THING THAT PUZZLES ME, CHIEF. IT WAS WHILE JARLING WAS RACING THAT YOU DECIDED HE MUST BE THE THIEF. WHAT MADE YOU THINK SO?
THOSE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS WILL TELL YOU, RUSTY


THEIR RIDING STYLES ARE QUITE DIFFERENT. JAKE JARLING TRAILS HIS LEFT TOE. BUT CHUCK KEEPS HIS LEG FORWARD. WHEN WE CHASED JARLING FROM THE SHOP, HE TRAILED HIS TOE TO TAKE A BEND. HE DID EXACTLY THE SAME THING WHEN IMPERSONATING CHUCK IN THE FIRST RACE, AND ALSO WHEN RIDING WITH CHUCK AS HIS PARTNER — IT'S SOMETHING HE CAN THINK ABOUT WHILE IN PRISON!
JAKE JARLING
CHUCK WILSON

KURDO *of the* STRONG ARM

HE MADE REDSKINS SEE "RED"

By Donald Dane

KURDO of the Strong Arm, the first white boy to explore North America, stirred where he lay hidden on top of the wooded bluff. He tensed with excitement as he eyed the river bank some distance away.

Kurdo had been following the river in the hope of finding the Red Indians. For the previous day they had found a boat which he had made, and they had ruthlessly destroyed it.

Kurdo was now determined to replace it with one of their canoes, so that he could paddle westwards to a part of the country where there were more rabbits and birds to be caught and eaten.

A stretch of boggy marsh ran from the foot of the bluff to the broad, fast-flowing river, on whose banks a dozen Indian canoes were beached.

Inland, on a grassy clearing, the Indians, or "Red Devils" as Kurdo called them, had pitched their tepees. Fires had been kindled the Redskins were obviously preparing for some feast or ceremony.

Kurdo had a great respect for the skill and cunning of the Redskins, but not one of them equalled him in build or strength. Though only a boy, he was over six feet in height, with broad, well-muscled shoulders and powerful arms.

Even so, Kurdo knew he was no match for a whole pack of them.

"I must wait till nightfall," he murmured. "Then it may be easier to make off with one of their canoes."

Several months ago, Kurdo had been carried off from his home in the Western Isles of Scotland by raiding Norsemen and had served as a galley slave. When the Viking ship had sighted a new country, Kurdo had escaped ashore, armed with a great Viking axe.

Kurdo had landed in what was later to be called North America.

"Ha, I have it!" Kurdo suddenly muttered. "I will cross the marshes through those tall reeds. They are taller than I am but I know of a way to see over them Once beyond them it will be easy to pounce on one of the canoes. And once afloat, Kurdo can out-paddle any Redskin."

He rose softly to his feet, lifting his great axe from the belt which supported his crude kilt of deerhide.

He Escaped from a Viking Ship and Set Out to Explore North America!

Retreating into the woods, he quickly set to work. In a short time he had two lengths of stout branch, each of which he chopped down the middle for some distance, so that it formed a crude stilt.

Attaching hide thongs to the stilts, Kurdo lay down and waited. The Redskins were very excited about something. A great pile of faggots had been built round a tall stake in the centre of their camp.

As Kurdo shaded his eyes and watched, he gave a start.

Painted warriors had appeared, dragging with them a fiercely-resisting captive, whom they started binding to the stake. The prisoner was an Indian—little more than a youth, perhaps the same age as Kurdo.

"A captive!" hissed Kurdo. "They have taken him from some other tribe. Now they will put him to the torture and burn him at the stake."

Kurdo drew in a deep breath.

"No!" he breathed. "I cannot let him perish. Kurdo must rescue him. The canoe can come later."

Slinging his stilts over his shoulders, Kurdo started scrambling down the rocky bluff in the gradually fading light. No one observed him, for all the Redskins were intent on their prisoner.

Binding the stilts to his legs with the thongs, Kurdo plunged quietly into the marsh, forcing his way amongst the dense reeds. Thanks to his stilts making him much taller, he could just see above them.

By the time he reached the fringe of the marsh close to the camp, bright flames shot up from the camp fire, illuminating the scene as if it was day.

A band of half-naked, befeathered Redskins, armed with bows, now started dancing round the stake to which their young captive was tied.

Dipping their arrows in the lighted camp fire as they passed, they now started shooting the blazing shafts at the faggots staked at the feet of their young captive.

Kurdo leapt at the Redskins like a thunderbolt!

"Back, dogs," he shouted, leaping from cover. "Back or you will feel the edge of Kurdo's axe."

The Redskins halted in amazement, and gave cries of superstitious terror. They had never set eyes on a white person before and it seemed as if some evil giant had leapt on them from the marshes.

Standing well over eight feet in the air, thanks to his stilts, Kurdo swung his great axe from right to left, and forged towards the doomed captive. The blazing arrows had already set the pile of faggots alight. Would he be in time to save the young Redskin?

Only one or two of the more daring braves tried to halt him. But these Kurdo sent flying with the flat of his axe's blade, or with well-aimed kicks of his stilts

Then he was at the fire, using the stilts to kick away the blazing faggots so that he could get at his quarry.

Flames surged up round the daring Kurdo, charring his stilts, singeing his red hair. But he had gripped the stake now, was sawing with his axe-blade at the captive's thongs!

"Run!" signalled Kurdo, pointing to the river bank as he lifted the young Redskin prisoner down. "I will keep off these curs."

Seeing the newcomer was human after all, the other Redskins had rallied, and were rushing to intercept him and the boy he had rescued.

But Kurdo, having kicked off his stilts, was now tugging at the stake itself. At last he had it loose, and was hauling it from the ground, having thrust his great axe back into his belt.

Now, raising the stake high, Kurdo charged his attackers.

Up, up he raised the stake. Then, with a yell, he tossed it straight at his enemies.

Crash!

Down it went, thin end first, toppling over and bowling Redskins right and left. Shouting in delight, Kurdo now sped after the youth he had freed.

Gaining the river bank, he looked behind him. He loosened his axe as he saw the whole howling band of Redskins in hot pursuit.

"Too late!" he mocked, and ran for the nearest canoe.

But before he could reach it, an arrow struck the youngster ahead of him in the thigh and brought him down!

How could Kurdo gain a canoe and escape from his enemies, burdened with a wounded boy?

A CANOE WAS HIS SHIELD

THE Redskin boy Kurdo had saved lay groaning on the ground. Arrows were falling thick and fast. Every moment the pursuit drew nearer Alone, armed with his axe, Kurdo would not be able to hold off the Redskins.

But Kurdo had a sudden inspiration.

Picking up the fallen boy, he slung him over one shoulder, and bounded like a stag for the beached canoes, swinging his great axe.

Crash! Thud! Crack!

He had driven the great axe blade through the sides of half-a-dozen canoes before he paused beside one that was upside down.

Kneeling down, still carrying the injured youth, Kurdo crept under it.

"Wah-eeee!"

A shrill scream of triumph came from the pursuing Redskins. They thought Kurdo had gone to cover, and that they would capture him and the boy. But as they ran towards the beach, their yells of glee changed to those of anger.

The canoe was rising off the beach, and moving down to the water, its back forming an excellent shield for Kurdo and his burden. The quick-witted white boy was calmly walking away from his foes!

A hail of arrows thudded against the canoe, some of them glancing off, others piercing it slightly

"The pale face is a fool," screeched the Redskins' Chief. "That canoe he carries is full of holes. It will sink when he attempts to float it. Then we shall have him."

But Kurdo was no fool. As he passed the last of the few canoes that he had not damaged, his axe head hooked on its prow and dragged the vessel along after him.

Kurdo then tipped the injured boy inside, slipped the axe in as well, and then pushed away the first canoe.

More arrows sang through the air, but now Kurdo was leaping into the other canoe, and grabbing a paddle. One terrific plunge of the blade and the canoe spun out to catch the current.

Kurdo of the Strong Arm laughed in triumph.

"Beaten you, O Red Ones!" he roared. "You have only two or three canoes left whole. Never shall one catch up on Kurdo."

Two canoes did set out in pursuit, but Kurdo was ahead, and increasing his lead every minute. His powerful arm and shoulder muscles, moving in perfect rhythm, had gained skill in tugging the oar of a Norse galley.

Only after some time did Kurdo ship his paddle, and survey his passenger. The Indian boy was stirring, but the barb of a broken arrow was still fixed in his thigh.

Kurdo drew a keen-edge hunting-knife from his belt. The boy had opened his eyes. For a moment they dilated in fear.

"I friend Kurdo," said Kurdo in the few words of Redskin language he had picked up in his travels across the North American continent. "Have no fear. I will treat your wound."

Realising that Kurdo meant to help him, the Redskin boy set his teeth as Kurdo used the knife to extract the barb The wound was dressed with some dried moss which Kurdo carried for tinder. Fine vine bound the moss to the boy's leg.

"It is only a flesh wound," smiled Kurdo.

"Ugh!" grunted the boy. "White giant, you are indeed a friend. Tahokee thanks you for rescuing him from his enemies."

Talking was difficult, but by means of odd words and signs, Kurdo gradually obtained Tahokee's story He was the son of a chief who ruled a tribe to the south, and he had been captured by enemy Redskins in a raid.

"My country is two days' travel by land," Tahokee announced. "When we reach it, my father will make you welcome. You shall ride with us to the buffalo hunt. You will be able to bend my father's bow, which is seven times the length of my forearm."

"Buffalo?" frowned Kurdo. "What is that?"

Tahokee laughed, and with the point of Kurdo's knife scratched a drawing of a bison on the birchbark of the canoe. Kurdo's eyes widened in surprise.

"Never have I seen such cattle," he exclaimed. "But now I must help you reach your father's camp. It lies on the route I planned to travel."

They camped that night on the river bank, feeding on freshwater mussels from the riverbed. Tahokee showed Kurdo how to bake them in the fire.

Early next day they resumed their trip downstream. Mountains reared around them, and soon the canoe was swirling along at the bottom of a narrow canyon.

"Beyond these hills are the prairies where the bison roam, and my people live," explained Tahokee. "But never have I come this way. We are riders of the prairie, not fishermen"

Kurdo suddenly cocked his head on one side. From ahead there came a roaring, booming sound. Clouds of spray could be seen rising in the air.

"Rapids," Kurdo exploded. "We shall have to be wary."

Round a bend in the canyon they swept, and now there was no need for paddling The canoe was seized in a terrific current and went bobbing on like a cork, Kurdo and Tahokee hanging on for their lives

Despite Kurdo's powerful paddling, the merciless current pulled the canoe towards the rocks With a mighty crash, the canoe struck, flinging Kurdo and his Redskin companion into the treacherous, fast-moving water.

Then they were through the curtain of spray and Kurdo was grabbing for his paddle, to fend their frail craft off a giant rock that rose from the whirling waters. The river was full of rocks, round which the water churned and boiled. It was a miracle that the canoe was not swamped!

But Kurdo was poised in the prow, paddle ready. The pace of the current increased, then with lightning suddenness they were shooting down a waterfall which ended in another series of rapids.

"Hang on, friend Tahokee!" warned Kurdo

They were heading straight for two needle-like rocks standing upright in the boiling flood. Kurdo made a desperate effort to push past, but too late

Crash!

The canoe rammed the nearest rock, splintering into fragments, throwing Kurdo and Tahokee into the flood. Kurdo did not get a chance to see how his comrade fared. The weight of the great axe in his belt was hampering him, dragging him down.

On, onwards the flood swept him, now on the surface, now thrust down beneath the surging rapids. Suddenly he saw Tahokee drifting past, his eyes closed. Kurdo grabbed at him with one hand, and they swept on together.

"I must part with my trusty axe," groaned Kurdo. "It and Tahokee are too much—"

Kurdo suddenly gave a shout of relief. The trailing limb of a great tree showed just ahead, a few feet above the water. Still holding on to Tahokee with one hand, Kurdo leapt up in the water and struck with his axe. The blade sank deep into the tree, anchoring him against the tug of the current.

Tahokee opened his eyes, blinking in amazement.

"I must have hit a rock," he cried. "I remember my head aching as if it would split. Then all went dark. Again you have saved my life, O Kurdo."

"Rest a moment, then make for the bank. The current will sweep you in," said Kurdo.

As Tahokee released himself, and struck out for the bank, Kurdo gripped the haft of his great axe with both hands, and hauled himself upwards. It was a difficult feat, but the muscles of Kurdo's strong arms were equal to it.

He gained the branch, pulled his axe free, then bounded along the tree's branches to the bank. He was just in time to help Tahokee ashore.

"See, we have conquered," grinned Kurdo.

They rested for a while, then mounted the steep slope on their right. At the summit they had a view over a wide valley which ended in a narrow pass through a range of rocky hills.

"Look!" cried Tahokee. "We go through that pass and on the other side is my father's country, and the prairies where our buffalo herds roam. Now all is well. Soon you shall be my father's honoured guest."

Kurdo tensed, dropping a hand on his comrade's arm.

"Not yet, Tahokee. Look!"

Tahokee turned, and gave a startled gasp. There in a hollow of the valley a great camp of tepees was set up. There were over two hundred Redskin braves there, and an equal number of horses. Riding towards the camp came another band of Redskins, wearing the feathers of the tribe that had held Tahokee captive.

And beyond the camp, solitary scouts on horseback were strung out across the valley.

"Now I know why I was tortured to make me talk before they tied me to the stake," breathed Tahokee. "These others are Chawnees and a war party. They are allies of those others from whom we escaped. This is bad medicine, O Kurdo. It can only mean one thing. They plan to make a surprise attack through the pass upon my father's village!"

KURDO'S SURPRISE ATTACK

"SO!" growled Kurdo. "They tortured you to try and learn how many braves there were to defend your village. Did you tell them?"

"I remained as silent as the hills," retorted Tahokee proudly. "But many men of my tribe will have left to cut timber in a far-away forest. My father cannot have more than fifty braves to defend his lodges. If the Chawnees and our old enemies make a surprise attack, they will overwhelm my tribe."

Kurdo snorted.

"I shall not only escort you to your people, but we shall take them warning," he vowed, "and find some means to trick these evil Red Men."

Tahokee looked at his stalwart comrade admiringly.

"But how?" he demanded.

"I shall think of a way," promised Kurdo. "Will they attack by day?"

"No," answered Tahokee definitely. "More likely they travel by night through the pass, and attack just before dawn."

"Then we have time," mused Kurdo. "I have a plan. Listen!"

Carefully, Kurdo unfolded his scheme to foil the enemy Redskins.

For the rest of the day they watched the Redskin camp, lying low under the cover of a tumble of great boulders. A party of Redskin riders, men from the village where Kurdo had rescued Tahokee, rode over the hills towards the river. No doubt they had gone to see if the two companions had survived the rapids.

The party returned just before dusk. Shortly afterwards, Kurdo and Tahokee crept from their hiding-place and down into the valley, using every bit of cover available. They had marked their men, silhouetted against the skyline, two of the scouts posted across the valley, each separated by a distance of above five hundred yards, each sitting on his horse, motionless, but watchful.

Halfway, Kurdo parted from his comrade. On all fours he crept through the long grass and scrub, keeping the wind in his face, so that his scent should not alarm the scout's horse.

Drawing his sling from a pouch at his belt, Kurdo selected a round, polished pebble about the size of an egg. Then he crept still nearer.

The moon was now beginning to rise, giving more light.

Kurdo tensed himself, and rose slowly to his knees. He knew that everything depended on his first cast with the sling. The sentry had to be stunned silently and swiftly with a blow on the forehead that would tumble him from his horse.

Then Kurdo could secure the animal, and ride to aid Tahokee before any alarm was raised!

He took careful aim, and then swung his sling with all his force and skill.

Crack!

It was a master shot. The heavy pebble took the Redskin sentry on one side of the forehead with terrific force. He gave a gasping sound and dropped, unconscious, from his horse and into the grass. The animal neighed in surprise, then backed a little.

Gripping its bridle, Kurdo soothed the horse and

bent over the senseless man. Tugging the band with the three feathers from the scout's head, he fitted it over his own. A moment later he was riding towards where the nearest scout, the one which Tahokee was going for

The Redskin scout saw him coming, and called softly

"What is wrong, O brother?" he asked. He could not see Kurdo's face, only the outline of his head and shoulders and the three feathers of the head-dress.

Kurdo held up one arm, as he had seen the Redskins do, and muttered something.

Already he had seen Tahokee's figure rising from the grass behind the scout. Slowly he slackened the great axe in his belt.

Tahokee leapt, just as Kurdo reined in his horse. Locking his arms round the Redskin scout's waist, Tahokee tugged him sideways. The sentry gasped and pulled out his hunting-knife, then opened his mouth wide to yell an alarm.

Smack!

Before that warning shout could be given, the flat of Kurdo's axe thudded on to his skull. He toppled, senseless, into Tahokee's arms.

"Well done, O Kurdo," the young Redskin grinned. "Now we each have a horse. Let us waste no time. In a few minutes these men will be missed and the alarm will be given. Ride, ride quickly for the pass."

He took the fallen sentry's bow and quiver, leapt on to the second horse, and together he and Kurdo went forward, slowly at first, but gathering speed with every minute. Then behind them, out across the valley, rang a loud, echoing wolf-howl!

One of the other sentries had spotted them. His call was taken up from other posts on each side of the valley. The alarm was raised! Kurdo dug his heels into his mount's sides and urged it into a wild gallop. Tahokee was hard after him.

As they galloped on towards the mouth of the pass, the moon rose higher, and light flooded the valley.

From behind them there suddenly came muffled shouting. Now the whole war-camp was alerted. On a piece of rising ground not far from the entrance to the pass Kurdo looked backwards.

The drumming of hundreds of hooves smote his ears. In the distance a great mass of riders rode in silent pursuit. Well in advance of them, and riding hard to outflank the two comrades, came three of the sentries who had been posted.

"The tribes ride to the attack now," panted Tahokee. "We can never warn my father and his braves in time, O Kurdo."

"You ride on when we reach the mouth of the pass," gritted Kurdo. "But first give me that bow and the quiver you took from the second scout. I shall deal with these three leading Red Men. It is for you to reach your village, and warn your father, the chief, while I remain here!"

THE FOUR-LEGGED ATTACKERS!

STANDING on the back of his borrowed steed, behind a buttress of rock at the mouth of the pass, Kurdo waited bow in hand. Tahokee had ridden on down the pass. Now galloping towards it, in a narrowing line, came the three scouts who formed the advance guard of the enemy Redskins!

Heaven thundering and heads lowered, the huge buffalo herd was stampeded from the pass by Kurdo and Tahokee. It was being sent into action against enemy Redskins!

Kurdo, hidden from view, waited till they were well within bow-shot. He had to stop them pursuing Tahokee. Aiming several feet ahead of the nearest pony, its rider flat out on its neck, he let fly.

Twang!

Kurdo's bow spoke. An arrow swirled past the horse's eyes like a lightning flash. With a wild neigh, the panic-stricken horse reared and stumbled, bringing down the animal next to it, and sending its rider flying.

The third pony then collided with the first, and they both went down in a kicking heap!

Laughing at the chaos he'd caused, Kurdo dropped down on to his mount's back, and urged it from cover. His immediate pursuers were unhorsed, and could not follow. Yelling scornfully as two arrows flashed over his head from his cheated pursuers, Kurdo galloped off up the pass.

But he knew that the main band of enemy Redskins was not far behind.

The pass twisted, narrowed, opened out, and then closed in again. Riding from between the high walls of a canyon, Kurdo suddenly found himself in the open. A camp-fire flamed not two hundred yards away.

As he rode for it, a rider came shouting towards him.

"Kurdo! Kurdo!"

It was Tahokee!

"I found one of our hunters by that fire, O Kurdo," he cried. "I have sent him to warn my father and his braves. It is half-an-hour's ride to the village. Somehow we must hold the pass until help arrives. He gave me his bow and tomahawk."

Kurdo frowned. What could he and Tahokee do against well over two hundred warriors?

He looked past Tahokee, over the grassy plain which he knew must be the beginning of the prairies. Dark, bulky shapes moved out there. Tahokee followed his glance, and smiled.

"The buffalo," he nodded. "A herd of them. But you will not see them properly till daylight."

"The buffalo!" Kurdo exclaimed. "There is a great herd there. They can save us. Quick, let us gather each a great blazing faggot from your hunter's fire, work round on each side of that herd. Then we will stampede them with our torches and drive them into the pass. Surely even the Chawnees and their allies cannot stand against a hundred of these great beasts charging down the narrow pass?"

Tahokee shouted in delight.

"Good medicine. You have the brain of a great warrior, O Kurdo. The buffalo will stop our enemies. And soon my father and his braves will be here."

He rode off towards the fire, jumped down and grabbed a long, blazing branch. Kurdo did likewise. Then, with shouts of encouragement to each other, they parted, one to each flank of the browsing herd of buffalo.

Closing in on the herd, the two comrades with their flaming torches had it quickly on the move. Led by a giant bull, the buffalo tried to head out into the wide prairie, but every time they did so, either Kurdo or Tahokee headed them off.

Unwisely, Kurdo rode too near to the thundering animals. His mount collided with one of the buffalo and was sent staggering away from the herd.

The jerk of the collision, while not hurting the horse nor throwing Kurdo, made the white boy lose his captured Indian headdress and also the flaming faggot.

Annoyed at his own foolishness, Kurdo drew his great axe. Yelling wildly he galloped on one side of the herd, brandishing the axe above his head.

Relentlessly the two comrades bunched the buffalo together and drove them for the pass. Thoroughly aroused, angry and frightened now, the massive animals stampeded. Into the mouth of the pass they careered at breakneck speed!

Behind the sea of tossing horns and broad backs, rode Kurdo and Tahokee, shouting and yelling to keep the animals on the move. The buffalo turned a bend half-way through the pass, and there, not two hundred yards away reining up in alarm, were the first ranks of the raiding Redskins!

Howls and yells of alarm rang out. Kurdo, standing on his pony's back, saw the start of the panic.

"See, Tahokee, these dogs are trapped. With walls of rock on either side of them, and the buffalo in front, they must flee or perish. Wah-ee-ee! Drive them harder! Victory will be ours!"

"Yoo-hoo-eee!" called Tahokee, in the war cry of his tribe. "Down with the Chawnees!"

The war-party hesitated, then, dropping their weapons, whirled and fled in panic from the onrushing buffalo. Many Redskins threw themselves headlong from their horses, and, frantic with fear, scrambled up the rocky walls of the narrow pass!

The others of the proud war-party fled from the other end of the pass in utter defeat!

The buffalo, close on their heels did not slacken speed till they found themselves in the open once more.

When Tahokee's father and forty of his braves, arrived at their end of the pass it was to be greeted by the comrades' triumphant shouts of victory.

Pointing to the crestfallen captives, Tahokee quickly related how Kurdo had not only saved his life twice, but that it had been his plan which had brought about the rout of their enemies.

"Your skin is white, but you have the heart of a Redman, O Kurdo. As a reward, you shall be our honoured guest as long as you care to remain," said the chief. "And we shall take you to hunt the buffalo."

He signalled Kurdo closer, then leaned over, and rubbed noses with him, and embraced him.

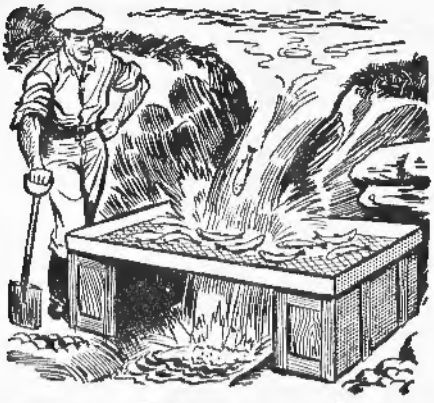
"As Tahokee is my son, so shall you be, O valiant Kurdo of the Strong Arm."

Kurdo smiled happily. At last he had found friends in this strange, but wonderful land!

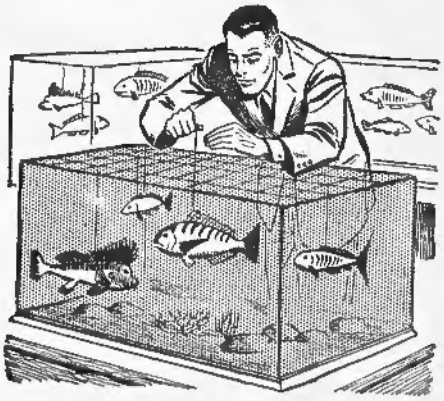
ANSWERS TO "WORLD-WIDE QUIZ" (See page 88)

1. Pineapple, Apricot, Damson.
2. A sash window.
3. Both have cowls.
4. Both pictures are correct. Some rhinoceroses have one horn and some two.
5. Eton.
6. King Charles II.
7. Long John Silver, of "Treasure Island."
8. A cow-catcher—to throw obstacles off the line.
9. Young swans are called cygnets.
10. A policeman—a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.
11. He's made the horse white instead of black. The horse was called Black Bess.
12. The man pops out of his door. If fine weather is coming, the woman pops out.
13. Beating the Bounds. The choir are beating the boundary lines of their parish.
14. A gargoyle—used as a water spout so that rain does not collect on the roof.
15. He is using a knife and fork. Ancient Britons never did so.
16. A sextant.

FISHY TALES—BUT THEY'RE TRUE!

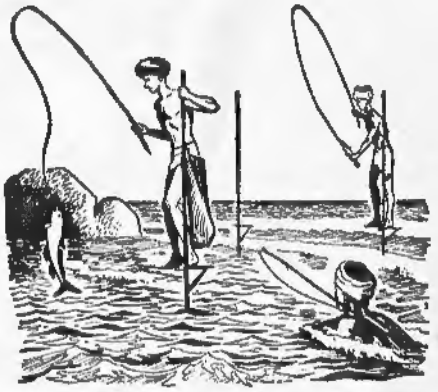


A one-acre pond in Thorley was stocked with 100 roach in order to provide sport for local fishermen. Four years later, it had to be drained as the ground was needed for cultivation. Workmen, filtering the water through a builder's sieve, were amazed when they made a haul of over 1,000 fish!

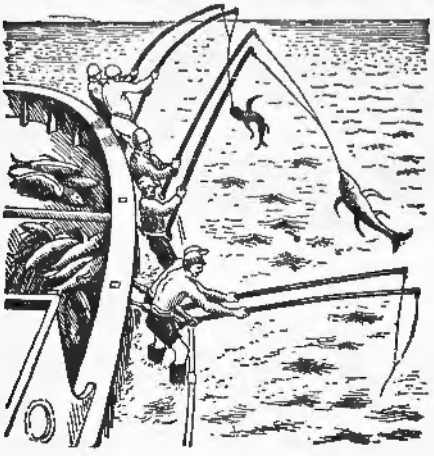


There isn't one real fish in the large aquarium owned by a man in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Instead, suspended by fine wire in the tanks, are fish carved from wood and celluloid, and painted so cunningly that they look almost alive.

Piloting underwater gliders, and taking photographs of swimming fish, is an exciting pastime among American water-sportsmen. The triangular-shaped gliders, towed from the surface by motor-boats, are steered by their pilots' feet. Each pilot wears a face mask and breathing apparatus to enable him to remain submerged for a long time.



Some of the natives of Ceylon have a cute scheme for catching fish without the expense of having to buy boats. Poles are driven into the sand at low tide; then, at high tide, the fishermen swim out and fish from them.



(Left)—The fishermen of Nova Scotia who sail in search of tuna usually fish in pairs from the stern of their ships. Each pair uses two poles connected to the same line and hook. This is because a tuna weighs between 35 and 50 pounds, and all the strength and skill of two fishermen is required to land it.

(Right)—This is how men who hunt swordfish go into action! As soon as a tell-tale fin is sighted, their boat is turned towards it by means of a small steering-wheel on the mast. When in range, the bow-man fires his harpoon, and the small boat is launched to bring aboard the unlucky swordfish.

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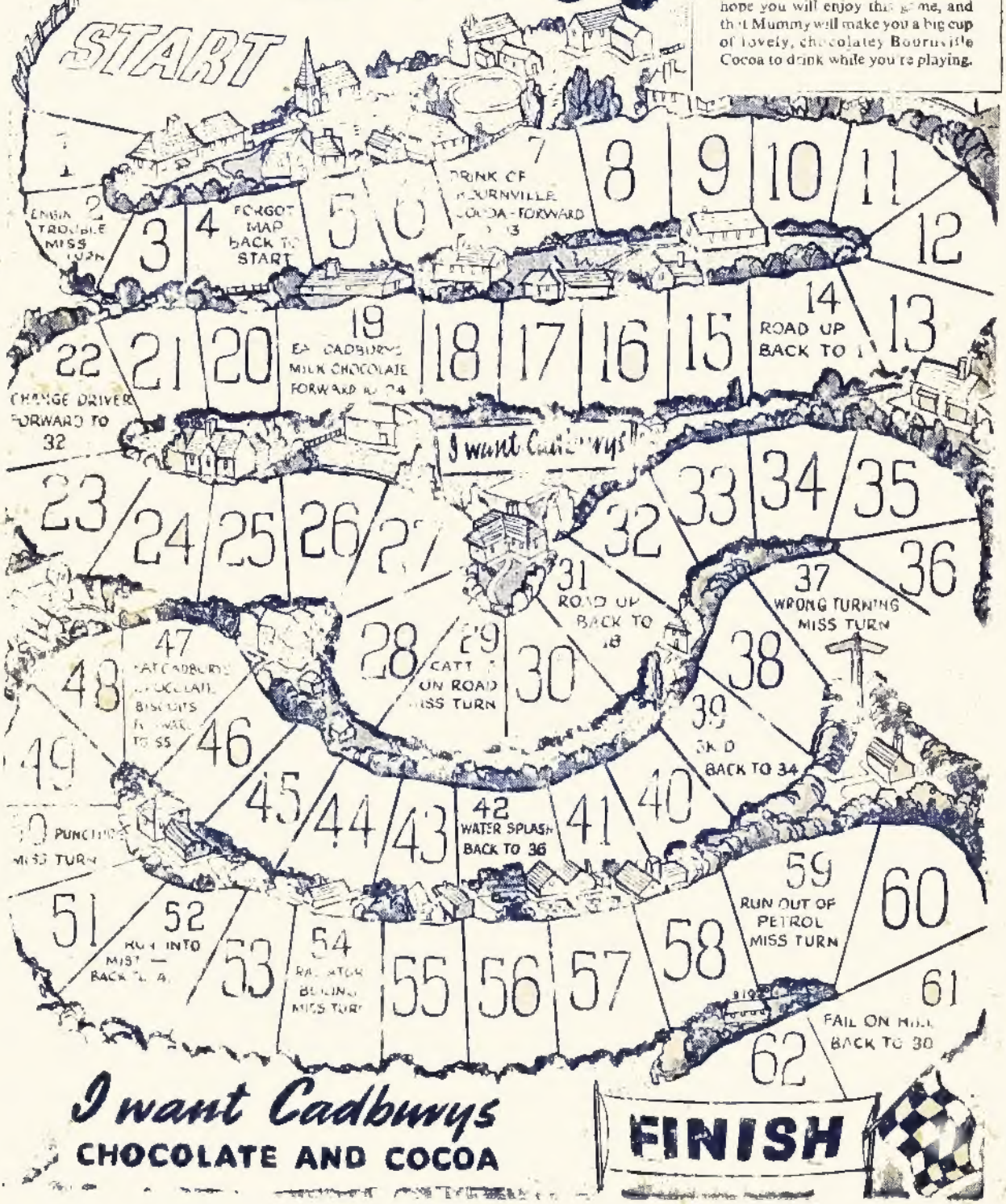
CADBURYS CAR RACE

HOW TO PLAY THIS EXCITING GAME

You need a dice, dice cup (an egg-cup will do) and a coloured counter or button for each player. Any number can take part. To start you must throw a six, and the winner is the first to reach the finish. With your last throw you must get the exact number to reach square 62: if you throw too high you must wait for another turn. Cadbury's, the makers of Bournville Cocoa and Cadbury's Chocolate, hope you will enjoy this game, and that Mummy will make you a big cup of lovely, chocolatey Bournville Cocoa to drink while you're playing.


START
ENGINE TROUBLE MISS TURN
FORGOT MAP BACK TO START
DRINK OF BOURNVILLE COCOA - FORWARD
ROAD UP BACK TO
CHANGE DRIVER FORWARD TO 32
EAT CADBURYS MILK CHOCOLATE FORWARD
I want Cadburys
ROAD UP BACK TO
WRONG TURNING MISS TURN
EAT CADBURYS CHOCOLATE BISCUITS FORWARD TO 55
CATTLE ON ROAD MISS TURN
SKID BACK TO 34
PUNCTURE MISS TURN
WATER SPLASH BACK TO 36
RUN INTO MIST — BACK TO 4
RADIATOR BOILING MISS TURN
RUN OUT OF PETROL MISS TURN
FAIL ON HILL BACK TO 30
I want Cadburys
CHOCOLATE AND COCOA
FINISH